

REDEEMED

By the same Author

A BRAZILIAN MYSTIC
CARTAGENA AND THE BANKS OF
THE SINU
DOUGHTY DEEDS
THE CONQUEST OF THE RIVER
PLATE
HERNANDO DE SOTO
PETRO DE VALDIVIA
A VANISHED ARCADIA

LONDON
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REDEEMED

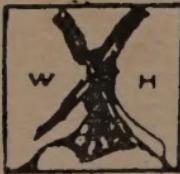
AND OTHER SKETCHES

BY

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM

"Cuando Tocolote canta, Indio muere
No lo creo, pero sucede"

Central American Aphorism



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TO
ELIZABETH DUMMETT

P R E F A C E

IN the dark ages, in South America, I had a capataz, called Candelario Carmona, a courteous, kindly man who could ride anything with hair on it, and a good guitar player, but obstinate as a male mule.

He could never see an orejano animal without putting my brand upon it.

As there is widespread ignorance amongst the educated proletariat, of matters of importance, I may explain that the term Orejano is used in South America for a beast without a brand. In Western Texas such a one is called a Maverick, after a certain Colonel Maverick, who, as the legend goes, looked on all animals as potentially his own.

In certain circumstances it is allowable to brand an orejano, but to Candelario all circumstances were good.

The neighbours used to laugh and say either the grass in Don Roberto's camp is the sweetest in the whole district, or else his capataz uses a lazo made from the hide of a long cow.

Justice, but not in my house, says the

proverb, and as I knew her to be blind and half suspected her of deafness in the most of cases, I did not wish to fall into her hands. So when a good-sized calf or colt, with the skin peeling off a half-healed brand upon its hip, mysteriously appeared amongst my animals, I used to lecture Candelario on the error of his ways.

He promised faithfully, swearing upon his children's heads, and he had seven of them, that he would never lift a lawless lazo on an animal again during the whole course of his life.

I doubt not that he took me for a fool, for he was one of those who, had he owned even a yoke of oxen, would soon have had a plentiful supply of calves from them. So, in despite of all that I could say, I found my cattle and my colts increasing mightily, especially when I had been away upon a journey for a month or two.

When I remonstrated and reproached him for having broken faith, he used to look at me, with a sly look out of his eye, just like a horse that kicks at the stirrup as you are mounting him, and say, "If a man happens to be born with a big belly, it is of little use to bind a sash round it." This, and the string of proverbs that he used to pour out, whether

P R E F A C E

they bore upon the subject or had no connection with it, such as, "A naked woman does not save her modesty by keeping on her gloves," did not prevent him following his old ways. So with the best grace I could assume I let him ride his hobby, seeing moreover it was to my advantage, and recognising how difficult it is to teach old dogs new tricks.

I might have ended my career a great cattle king, for I have known such, who, starting life from just as small beginnings as my own, finished up millionaires, but with this difference, that they required no capataz to brand other people's cattle for them. Fate willed it otherwise. For several years Candelario used to write to me, that is, he got the owner of the nearest pulperia, a Spanish Basque, who never could make nouns and adjectives agree in gender, to do it for him.

Droughts, floods, fandangos, Indian incursions, locusts and the like, things just as interesting as the divorces and adulteries that fill the newspapers, and less demoralising, I learned of, after I had laboriously spelled out the Basque's caligraphy and phonetic rendering of the tongue.

These letters ceased, after one saying

certain malicious bastards, for he was certain Holy Mother Church had never coupled up their parents, had falsely put about a rumour that he killed his neighbour's cows on nights without a moon. I knew his heart (he said), and how repugnant to his sense of honour such a deed would be. Moreover, such things were difficult to prove, for were a man to demean himself to such an action, he would be sure to cut the brand out of the hide, and certainly on his way home would lead his horse in the bed of some stream or other, to cover up his trail. That was the last I ever heard of him, and in what Pampa he now rides that is to me unknown. Only I hope he has good horses and finds grass growing for them all the year round, and water flowing from some celestial spring or other, for I presume, if heaven is heaven, it must be surely what we have loved on earth, a little sublimated. As time went on, gradually Candelario's corporeal image vanished from my mind, for time and toleration are the only solvents nature has placed at our disposal. They, give them time, dissolve everything, even our prejudices.

So Candelario's attitude became more comprehensible to me as time went on, and toleration grew with it. Not for a moment

had I ever thought that Candelario branded all these animals out of the love and the affection that he bore to me, still less to increase my welfare and give me what is called in England a status in the land.

For the first time or two, I have no doubt, he did it carelessly, for when a man has a good horse between his thighs, knows he can throw the lazo, and fell opportunity presents itself, it is a hard thing to refrain.

Temptation cometh neither from the east nor from the west, but like the poor, is always with us. Sometimes a bottle and at other times a wench, a title, ribbon, tip for a block of shares, or, best of all, a little cheque discreetly given for imaginary services or future villainy. So, as a general rule, mankind does not put up a very stiff resistance to any form in which temptation manifests itself, but goes down talking, trying to save its face. Moreover, anyone who has been cajoled, trapped or persuaded into any kind of promise, usually looks upon himself more as a victim than as a criminal, when he succumbs to fate.

Promises made to oneself are harder to evade, for all of us are bond slaves to that conceit that makes us think ourselves compounded of some different kaolin to every other man.

P R E F A C E

Thinking upon a vow I registered eleven years ago (Postume, Postume !), not to write any more short stories, it seems to me that possibly the reflections that I used to cast on Candelario's female ancestry when he broke faith with me, were injudicious and perhaps not fully proven. I fancy now that if we were to ride out together "campeando" animals, and a good-looking orejano was feeding in a glade in a "rincon" beside some river, that I should look at him and set my horse into a gallop with a shout, and in a minute more two raw-hide ropes would settle round the horns.

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.

CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|----------------------------------|------|
| REDEEMED | 15 |
| LOS LLANOS DEL APURE | 28 |
| ANIMULA VAGULA | 40 |
| WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT | 58 |
| LONG WOLF | 70 |
| OROPESA | 82 |
| LA VIRGEN DE LA CABEZA | 93 |
| INCH CAILLEACH | 103 |
| EL ALCALDE DE MÓSTOLES | 110 |
| EL LEBECHE | 121 |
| DAR-EL-JINOUN | 126 |
| PROMOTED | 136 |
| AT NAVALCÁN | 148 |
| INVENI PORTUM | 161 |
| EUPHRASIA | 172 |
| A HUNDRED IN THE SHADE | 177 |

REDEEMED

THE great hotel, a cross between a railway station and a Swiss chalet distorted in a dream, magnified and made vulgar beyond the ordinary inartistic vision of mankind, stood up and challenged the stern Alpine scenery.

Snow streaked the mountains that towered behind it, far into the summer, giving an air as of a monstrous iced pudding to the yellow cliffs. The territory in which the caravanserai neared its spiky roof was all redeemed. Purchased with blood, as every territory, redeemed or otherwise, is purchased from its former owners, when it changes hands. Blood had been shed in every Alpine valley, upon the stony plains, and on the mountain sides.

Blood had purified the flowers. Fumitory, meadow-sweet, hepatica, harebells, prunella, gentian, arnica, and all the infinite sub-alpine flora, from tiny eyebright to rank-growing leopardsbane and viper's bugloss, had been sanctified, baptized in blood. They were all redeemed, and raised their eyes to heaven rejoicing that one national flag had been substituted for another, and that the world

had made a step upon the road towards perfection.

Botzen had been altered to Bolzano, Brixen to Bresanone, a melodious change, that perhaps was worth while what it must have cost in bloodshed and in loss of life. Flaxen-haired, stolid little children learned their lessons in a foreign tongue. Throughout the valleys of the district, peasants, brought from Naples and from Sicily, drilled and equipped in shoddy uniforms, had slaughtered peasants equally unbecomingly arrayed, from Austria, Bohemia, Carinthia, and all the kaleidoscopic kingdoms, States, Banats, and Sandjaks of the whilom empire that, someone said, was composed of as many pieces as a patchwork quilt.

These brethren in the faith of Christ, who till the time that they first met in strife had been generally ignorant of each other's existence upon earth, had fought like wolves to redeem or to defend a territory that most of them had never heard of in their lives.

Lousy and footsore, in hunger and in thirst, they had given all they had to give, their blood. As they lay wounded, waiting for death, behind the rocks, in mud-holes and in woods, the birds of prey had picked their eyes out, wolves had gnawed their limbs. Their fellow-sufferers, the gallant horses, still more helpless

REDEEMED

and more innocent of all offence than they themselves, had suffered the same fate.

In lonely cottages, hundreds of miles away, in the hot rice-fields, amongst the orange-gardens of Trinacria, in lonely Alpine villages, old men and mothers mourned the loss of Hans, Giovanni, Giacomo, and Fritz, who should have ploughed the fields and reaped the crops, but who lay rotting in the mire or shrivelling in the sun.

Generals in uniforms, plastered with bits of ribbon, like a collection of military postage stamps, had received honours of one kind or another for their share in the sorry business. Orators sweating in the sun had worked themselves into an agony of patriotism in the parturition of their perorations, and had been acclaimed by frantic crowds. Parties had fallen, and been replaced by other parties, just as venal as themselves, parties who, till they had got their hands upon the national treasury, had been the foremost advocates of peace, humanity, and justice for mankind. Then they had all turned patriots, except those who had found a better way to fill their pockets, by preaching hatred betwixt man and man.

Even all just or unjust wars must have an ending. So peace, with all its horrors, as the South American General referred to it, in

REDEEMED

bidding good-bye to his troops after a campaign, descended on the land, and all was as it had been before, but that the flag was changed. Girls still drove cattle to the pastures, and in the village streets old women still sat spinning, whilst mothers searched their children's heads for wonders of the insect world.

The church bells sounded as of yore, calling the faithful to give thanks unto the god of battles, who in his infinite solicitude for their welfare had done so much towards their happiness.

Crocuses peeped out shyly in the spring. Arums unfurled their mottled leaves in damp, shady places. Almond and plum trees displayed their fairy glory in the keen mountain air. The upland pastures became sheets of delicate embroidery, as daisies, buttercups, and speedwell traced their designs upon them, infinite, intricate, yet so inevitable that only nature could have worked so marvellous a sampler.

War had but little raged in the mountain commune, although so many of its sons had fallen in other districts fighting for liberty or in defence of their beloved country from the invader, according to the standard under which they had chanced to be enrolled. Such of the villagers as struggled back, broken

in health and mutilated, were looked at more in the light of wretches worthy of compassion, than of heroes. They themselves spoke little of their battles ; never of glory or of patriotism, but loved to dwell upon the wonders they had seen, as railways, steamships, and the great cities through which they might have passed.

The village might have slumbered on indefinitely, insanitary, picturesque, and mediæval-looking, with cobbled streets and cow-byres underneath the houses, so that the sweet breath of the animals served to counteract a little the garlic-scented respiration of the Christians who lived above them, had not a tourist from some great centre of progress, culture, charity, art, prostitution, drink, wealth, and poverty happened to pass through the valley on his motor-bicycle. His eye, always cocked like a pointer's ear at game, for any chance to make an honest or dishonest penny, at once took in the natural advantages the place presented for an hotel.

Sheltered from all the winds, except the south, well wooded, and with mountains forming an amphitheatre behind it, the village stood on a little platform that looked out upon the lake.

The climate, mild and equable during the

REDEEMED

summer, was not too hot for golf or tennis or any of the pastimes that have made men healthy and developed intellect to such a point that Plato, Newton, or Descartes would be quite unremarkable amongst their votaries.

A spring, fetid enough to heal most of the imaginary ailments that afflict people in a high state of culture, had been found by a chamois hunter, the kind of man whom nature and providence usually select as the recipient of their confidences.

Thus all was ready for the fructifying touch of capital—that capital that is a blessing or a curse, according as it happens who possesses it. Lorries and carts soon began to arrive upon the site the syndicate had chosen for the great hotel. Black-coated, supernaturally important-looking men, with measuring tapes and with theodolites, went through their mysteries, tracing out on the ground a plan that looked ridiculously small. Workmen from every portion of the kingdom poured into the valley, and wages rose at once throughout the district. A general federation of amalgamated labour unions was formed. The villagers learned for the first time how miserable they had always been under the tyranny they had not felt, till it was pointed out to them.

REDEEMED

Called on to execrate the mayor, the doctor, priest, and the owner of the shop, they always did so at the meetings of the local trades union to which they were called on to subscribe ; but being of a gentle, kindly nature, long bound in conventions of a primitive and human polity, when in the streets they met their tyrants they greeted them with their accustomed smiles, took off their hats, and clamoured eagerly to “ kuss die hand.”

One or two shoddy villas sprang up, owned by the members of the syndicate, and by degrees the villagers became ashamed of their ancestral costume, except those who were enrolled as guides or paid to stand about to keep up local colour in the streets. When the hotel was finished and had been duly opened by the governor of the emancipated district, with the assistance of the bishop of the diocese, who prayed to the Almighty to ward off lightning or inundations from it, to make the hotel a focus of true Christian progress, and prosper it financially, the national flag was duly hoisted over the consecrated edifice. Then the whole village was invited to inspect the premises. Dressed in their homespun clothes, emitting a strong scent of the wool from which they had been made, their hob-nailed shoes skating and sliding upon the slippery

floors, they strayed about with open mouths admiring all the specimens of Art Nouveau with which the mansion was adorned.

The imitation Spanish tiles, the callipygic Venuses, holding up torches that stood on each side of the staircase, the fountain with the gold fish swimming about the artificial rocks that lined the basin, the palm-trees in their terra-cotta pots, the lifts, the porter in his uniform, the chambermaids, some of whom came from the village, dressed up in smart new frocks, with muslin aprons, with bows of ribbon of the national colours pinned in appropriate places, the racks of postcards, depicting the quiet Alpine valley, in cobalt, in lemon yellow, and a green so vivid as to almost turn the eye inside out, and all underneath a sun comparable alone to that of San Fernando de Apure, all was fairyland. Being by nature a well-mannered race, they interfered with nothing, but exclamations of Gross-artig, Wonderbahr, Gemütlich, interspersed with Viva il Tuce ! Viva l'Idalia ! for the tongue of their redemption was not yet quite familiar to them, were heard on every side.

Then they filed out, decorously, and in order, not leaving even a sandwich paper or a broken bottle to mark their passage, as would

have happened in lands more civilised. The mildness of the climate, the scenery, and the fame of the spring, now known as La Sorgente del Camoscio, attracted visitors in crowds. Their advent had the usual effect upon the villagers, who rapidly became mere parasites on the hotel. The girls, who formerly had gone about in the rough costumes that their ancestors had worn from the remotest times, now were all shingled, dressed in shoddy imitations of the prevailing fashions, painted and powdered when they could afford it, and not infrequently drifted off to towns to try their luck in the one calling that needs no apprenticeship.

The children carried faded flowers in their hands, and when they saw a stranger they would offer them with a professional little grin that they soon all acquired.

The men made walking-sticks and carved objects out of wood, with which the shops were stocked to overflowing, for all the guests in the hotel, having but little else to do, took away something or another with the name of the village stamped upon it as a souvenir.

Inside the hotel, life went on pretty much as we may suppose it goes on amongst the fish in an aquarium, with the exception that the human specimens were summoned to

REDEEMED

their meals with greater regularity. All nationalities met on a basis of general futility. Windows were rarely opened, and as the central heating was maintained as piously as the fire of Vesta, a smell as of a monkey-house prevailed, tempered a little by the scent of powder and the perfumes with which the women drenched themselves, although protesting it was quite out of fashion and the last thing that they would use. Americans, English, French, Germans, Italians, and representatives of almost every nation upon earth, vying with one another in their commonness, sat about the great hall of the hotel at little tables, plethoric, scarlet-faced, and semi-torpid after lunch, like anacondas when they have devoured a deer. Palms of the genus *Chamærops Hotelensis* and *Aspidistras*, that plant which like the sparrow resists life in conditions that surely nature never intended either for plants or birds to live in, made up a flora fit for the artistic aspirations of the guests.

A jazz band brayed out its cacophonies regardless of the negro rhythm, and only striving to produce the maximum of noise, almost unceasingly, most of the day and night. The lack of rhythm did not inconvenience any of the clients, who jiggled and jiggled

R E D E E M E D

as long as the musicians discoursed their melodies.

Stout ladies, who had brought their salaried dancing dogs with them, waddled or tottered round the room, gazing up into their victims' faces with a leer.

Half-naked girls squeezed themselves up against rich, tottering old men, as lizards flatten themselves out upon a wall where the sun kisses it. Legs seem disjointed at the knee in the last negro importation from America. Hips wagged just like the rumps of a troop of cattle waggle as a man sees them seated on his horse when they start jogging on the road.

The scene resembled nothing so much as a Candombe danced by our coloured brethren in Colombia or Brazil, but without their abandonment or their lewd joy in life. Photographed by flashlight, it might have been hung up outside a cage of chimpanzees, to show how true man had remained to the primeval type, after a million years.

When once the great glass doors of the hotel had closed upon the servile, yet sniggering servants, and the stench of petrol left behind, the Alpine valley stretched out towards the hills, unspoiled and beautiful. The sunlight played on the dark, yellow cliffs, turning

REDEEMED

them in the evening into vast braziers. At daybreak as the sun rose, it turned the self-same cliffs to prisms with a myriad of tints, shrouded and chastened in the white mist that hung like a fine steam about them.

Birds twittered in the trees, and cattle that had slept upon the highest place that they could find amongst the stone-strewn upland pastures, rose lazily to graze. Campion and centaury opened their petals to the dawn after their long night's rest. Spirals of blue smoke ascended from the cottage chimneys, and far away amongst the hills the cow-bells tinkled, and the voices of the herd-boys, raised to an artificial pitch as they talked to each other from one side of the valley to the other, came floating down the breeze.

All seemed idyllic, and like what Eden may have been when animals alone were its inhabitants.

It seemed impossible that so much blood had been poured out to redeem people who required no redemption, but only wished to listen to their lives, as a tree sheds its leaves in autumn and renews them in the spring.

Green hillocks here and there showed where the dead who had fallen fighting had been buried namelessly, without a stone to mark their resting-places. All these redeemers (or

REDEEMED

redeemed) were as forgotten, as much forgotten, as if they never had been. But, in the little cemetery by the low-eaved church there stood seven wooden crosses rapidly falling into disrepair. One bore the lettering Austrian Soldier, another Unknown German, and a third An Italian, name unknown. The other four had no inscription, save Soldiers, not identified. These seven nameless ones, sleeping in the sweet mountain air, under their mouldering crosses, in the quiet churchyard, enamelled with its Alpine flowers, had achieved their redemption, as it were, unwittingly, sealing it with their blood.

They sleep so soundly, it may well be, that they will never hear the call of the last trump.

LOS LLANOS DEL APURE

MAN has not staled their wildness, and they still stretch out along the Orinoco, the Apure, and the Arauca to the far-distant Meta, just as they first came from the Creator's hand when on the seventh day He rested from a work that He must surely now and then regret. A very sea of grass and sky, sun-scourged and hostile to mankind. The rivers, full of electric eels, and of caribes, those most ravenous of fish, more terrible than even the great alligators that lie like logs upon the sand-banks or the inert and pulpy rays, with their mortiferous barbed spike, are still more hostile than the land.

In the four hundred years the Llanos have been known to Europeans man has done little more than to endow them with herds of cattle and with bands of half-wild horses and of asses that roam upon them just as their ancestors roamed the steppes of Asia from the remotest times. Islets of stunted palm-trees break the surface of the plains, as the atolls peep up in the Pacific Ocean and also bear their palms. The sun pours down like

LOS LLANO DEL APURE

molten fire for six months of the year, burning the grass up, forcing the cattle to stray leagues away along the river banks, or in the depths of the thick woods. Then come the rains, and the dry, calcined plains are turned into a muddy lake, on which the whilom centaurs of the dry season, paddle long, crank canoes dug from a single log.

The Llanos, with their race of half-amphibious herdsmen, but little differing in features and in hue from their ancestors, the Achagua Indians, have been the scene of great events. They have had their days of glory, when they were almost household words in Europe during the great struggle for the independence of the Spanish Colonies, a hundred years ago. At the Queseras del Medio, by their aid, Paez, Prince of Llaneros, and almost the last good lance that villainous saltpetre has left to history, broke the cavalry of Spain. Out of the woods, sheltered behind the smoke of the dry grass they had set on fire, the saddleless, wild horsemen, half-naked, with but a rag or two tied round their bodies by a thong of hide, swooped on the uniformed, drilled, disciplined, brave, heavy-handed Spanish troopers, like the riders of the Valkyrie. Paez, himself as wild and savage in those days as any of his men, rode at their head upon a

REDEEMED

half-tamed colt. Those were not days of tactics, for personal prowess, perhaps for the last time in history, ruled everything. It must have been a glorious sight to see their charge, the flying hair, the tossing manes and tails, the dust, the shrill screams of the attacking horsemen, the answering shouts of "Viva España" of the Spanish troops, the frightened taotacos whirling above them uttering their harsh note, while in the sky the vultures sailed aloft, like specks against the sapphire blue, knowing a banquet was being set for them. To-day the Llanos that furnished the troops with which Paez so ably seconded Bolivar in his long fight for independence are almost depopulated. No one seems to know the cause.

Though much of the population has gone, enough remains to herd the cattle, the vast Llanos' only wealth. Unlike the Gauchos and the Mexicans, the Roman Butari, the Arabs of North Africa, the Western cowboy (before fell cinemas made a puppet of him), any old saddle, any clothes, content the dweller on the plains of the Apure. His horse is almost always thin, often sore-backed, and always looks uncared for, while the ungainly pace at which he rides, a shambling "pasitrote," or tied camel waddle, moving both

LOS LLANO DEL APURÉ

feet on the same side at once, deprives him of all grace. Still few can equal, none excel, him for endurance. Nothing daunts him, neither the peril of the rivers, with all their enemies to mankind ever awake, to tear or numb the unlucky horseman who may come near their fangs or their electrically charged bodies, or any other danger either by flood and field. He, of all wielders of the raw-hide noose, alone secures it, not to the saddle, but to his horse's tail, fishing for, rather than lassoing a steer, playing it like a salmon with a rope a hundred feet in length, instead of bringing it up with a smart jerk, after the fashion of the Argentines or Mexicans. Abominably slow and tedious in his methods to the eyes of commentators ; still it is never wise, in matters of such deep import, to criticise or to condemn customs that use and wont have consecrated.

If the Llaneros have changed outwardly, the Llano has remained the same. No puffing steam engine or petrol-reeking car defile its surface. Diligences it has never had, and the sole method for a caballero when he wants to traverse it is on a horse. Some indeed may have ridden mules. Camels and asses, with llamas, yaks, bullocks, and buffaloes, no doubt can carry man upon their backs, but on the

REDEEMED

horse alone can he be truly said to ride. So the Llanero still rides the Llano on his pacing horse, the reins held high, the stirrups dangling from his naked toe, his eyes fixed on the horizon, as a sailor, on his watch, looks out across the sea. The mirage still hangs castles in the air and cheats the eye in the terrific heat with pools of water, always just out of touch, as happiness is ever out of reach in life. The Promised Land is always a day's march ahead of us.

Unchanging and unchanged, the Llanos swelter in the sun as they first sweltered at the creation of the world, and as La Puebla saw them in the expedition that Maestre Diego Albeniz de la Cerrada describes, he who wrote, as it were in a mirage, his observation so minute, his gift of artistry so great, and with his dates, and trifles of that nature, all awry. So distant are the Llanos from our vain-glorious, noisy, and evil-smelling civilisation, as to be almost unaware that such a thing exists. They await the coming of the thing called progress, just as a girl may dream about her marriage night without exactly knowing what it means.

Meanwhile, through palm woods looking exactly like those of the Argentine Gran Chaco, through jungle and through woods,

LOS LLANO DEL APURE

in dust, in rain, under a sun that blisters, if you touch an iron stirrup, the post of the republic carried in canvas bags on two grey mules accompanied by an apocalyptic horse, trails wearily across the plains. If in their pilgrimage the mules, the old white horse, and the dark half-breeds chance to light on a Velorio, or a wedding at a rancho on the road, they join in it, for after all to-morrow is another day, and time is certainly not money, under the rule of him whose fellow-citizens style "El Benemerito."

Even the garden by the Tigris could hardly have been fairer or more bird-haunted than the banks of the Apure, with its myriads of egrets making the trees as white as is a northern wood after a fall of snow. Legions of aquatic birds as black as jet sweep down the rivers in battalions, succeeding one another as if some feathered general was marshalling them to fight.

Flocks of flamingos rise from the waters, as Aphrodite rose up from the waves, rosy and beautiful. Piero di Cosimo alone could have dealt with them in paint, and if the painter of the "Death of Procris" had but visited the Apure, among his pelicans, his flamingos, and his swans, he would have placed new species, as fit to grace his theme and far more gorgeous

REDEEMED

than the birds of the old world. In the freshness of the dawn, when a white mist bathes all the woods upon the rivers in a thin vaporous haze through which the trees show faintly, as a rich purple or green burnous tinges the fleecy whiteness of an Arab's haik, nature exults in the new birth of day.

The Llano for a brief moment turns to a tender green and stretches out like an interminable fresh field of corn. From the recesses of the woods along the river banks comes the harsh screaming of the parrots, and birds and insects raise their morning hymn of praise. Stilled are the voices of the prowling animals of prey, insistent during night. The jaguar no longer snarls, or whets his teeth against the tree trunks. The red, howling monkeys start their chorus, sounding as if a lion was raging in the everglades, and the shy tapir after a night passed feeding on the sedges and the grass swims to his lair, his head and back just showing, like a river horse, leaving a silvery trail behind him to mark his silent passage through the stream. Wild cattle troop back to the woods, before the vaqueros intercept them with their swift horses and their unerring noose.

Without an interval of crepuscule, the sun rises at once fierce, fiery, and inexorable,

LOS LLANO DEL APURE

streaking the sky with rays of orange and of scarlet for an instant, then bursts upon the world like a fell enemy before whom fly all living things except the saurians, who bask somnolently upon the sand-banks, immune against his rays. Just at the break of dawn fish leap in shoals into the air, making the water boil, their silvery bodies for a moment springing like crescent moons into the air and falling with a splash into the deep. His well-greased lazo ready coiled in front of his right knee, his brown, bare toes sticking out through his alpargatas, clutching the light Llanero stirrup with its crown-like prolongation underneath the foot, the Llanero scans the horizon as his horse paces rapidly along, leaving a well-marked trail upon the dewy grass. He sits so loosely in the saddle that one would think if his horse shied it must unseat him, but that he also shies. High on his vaquero saddle, so straight and upright that a plummet dropped from his shoulder would touch his heel, he reads the Llano like a book.

Nothing escapes his sight, as keen as that of his Achagua Indian ancestors. Signs on the ground, almost undiscernible, he marks. If his horse, tripping along at its artificial gait, stumbles or pecks, he curses it, objurgating its

REDEEMED

female ancestry, gives it a sharp pull with the bit, digs in his spurs, interrupts for a moment the interminable "galeron" that he is crooning in a low voice, and pointing with his whip says, "Three horses passed along here early in the night. One is the big cream colour that always strays, for he is a little lame in the off hind foot, see where he has stepped short upon it." With an unerring eye he sights a steer with a strange brand. "That is one of General Atilio Pacheco's animals," he says, and turning to his companion, smiling, remarks, "If he stays too long in these parts he may stay for ever, for God is not a bad man, anyhow."

As the sun rises higher in the heavens, the light distorting everything, magnifying or diminishing, according as its rays are refracted, dried tufts of grass appear as large as clumps of canes, and animals on the horizon as small as turkey buzzards. Then the vaquero heads for home, after assuring himself that no bullock has been killed by a tiger in the night, or has got wounded from any cause and requires treatment to prevent maggots from breeding in the wound. Clouds of dust rise on the horizon. The morning breeze dies out entirely during the hottest hours, and the plain shimmers in the heat. Bancos and mesas,

LOS LLANO DEL APURE

those curious sand formations that intersect the Llanos like striations in a rock, give back refracted heat to meet the heat descending from above. All nature groans. Only the lizards and iguanas seem to revel in it. Homing vaqueros, their "pelo de Guama" hats coal-scuttled fore and aft against the enemy, lounge in their saddles. Their horses plod along, with drooping heads, too weary even to swish their tails against the flies. At the straw-thatched houses the riders get off with a sigh and seek the shade of the "caney."

As the heat waxes and the air quivers as if it came from some interior furnace, a deathly silence broods upon the plains. A sense of solitude creeps over everything, as if the world had been consumed by some unlooked-for cataclysm that had destroyed mankind. The weary horses, who endure the burden of their lives either parched with thirst, or forced to live a half-amphibious life during the periodical inundations, exposed year in, year out, to the perpetual torment of mosquitoes, horse-flies, ticks and all the "plagas" of the insect world, with the off-chance of sudden death from the fangs of tiger or caiman, seek shelter where they can, under the scanty foliage of the Moriche palms. Cattle have long ago retired as far as possible into the reedy

R E D E E M E D

swamps. Nothing is stirring ; not a sound breaks the afflicted silence of the sun-cursed plain, but the perpetual calling " Oh, ah ho" of the small, speckled doves. Gradually the heat decreases, a breeze springs up, and nature, after her long struggle with the sun, revives.

The animals, who have passed the hot hours under whatever shade that they could find, recommence eating and birds show signs of life. Parrots scream harshly. Flights of macaws, yellow and red and blue, the great white patches round their eyes making them look as if they all wore spectacles, soar like particoloured hawks, uttering their croaking cry. The interval of freshness is all too brief, for night falls without twilight on the Llanos ; and the sun dips down under the horizon just as he does at sea.

Before the darkness closes in, flights of birds migrate towards the woods, fire-flies dart to and fro among the dark metallic leaves of the jungle fringing the river, and from the recesses of the forests the nightly chorus of the wild animals, silent through the day, breaks out. Then comes the miracle ; the miracle of miracles, unknown to those who have not journeyed on those interminable steppes or sailed upon the Apure or the Orinoco. No words can paint the infinite gradation of the

LOS LLANO DEL APURE

scale of colour that leaves the spectroscope lacking a shade or two. Green turns to mauve, then back to green again ; to scarlet, orange, and vermillion, flinging the flag of Spain across the sky. Dark coffee-coloured bars, shooting across a sea of carmine, deepen to black ; the carmine melts into pale grey. Castles and pyramids spring up ; they turn to cities ; the pyramids to broken arches, waterfalls, and ships, with poops like argosies. Gradually pale apple-green floods all the heaven ; then it fades into jade. Castles and towns and ships and broken arches disappear. The sun sinks in a globe of fire, leaving the world in mourning for its death.

Then comes the after-glory, when all the colours that have united, separated, blended and broken up, unite and separate again, and once more blend. A sheet of flame, that for an instant turns the Apure into a streak of molten metal, bathes the Llano in a bath of fire, fades gradually and dies, just where the plain and sky appear to join as if the grass was all aglow.

ANIMULA VAGULA

" You see," the Orchid-hunter said, " this is just how it happened ; one of those deaths, that I have seen so many of, here in the wilderness."

He stood upon the steamer's deck a slight, grave figure, his hair just touched with grey, his flannel Norfolk jacket, which had once been white, toning exactly with his hat and his grey eyes.

At first sight you saw he was an educated man, and when you spoke to him you felt he must have been at some great public school. Yet there was something indefinable about him that spoke of failure. We have no word to express with sympathy the moral qualities of such a man. In Spanish it is all summed up in the expression, " *Un infeliz.*" Unlucky or unhappy, that is, as the world goes ; but perhaps fortunate in that interior world to which so many eyes are closed.

Rolling a cigarette between his thin, brown, fever-stricken fingers, he went on : " Yesterday, about two o'clock, in a heat fit to boil your brain, a canoe came slowly up the stream

ANIMULA VAGULA

into the settlement. The Indian paddlers walked up the steep bank carrying the body of a man wrapped in a mat. When they had reached the little palm-thatched hut over which floated the Colombian flag, that marked it as the official residence of the Captain of the Port, they set their burden down with the hopeless look that marks the Indian, as of an orphaned angel.

“ ‘ We found this “ Mister ” on the banks,’ they said, ‘ in the last stage of fever. He spoke but little Christian, and all he said was, “ Doctor, American doctor, Tocatalaima ; take me there.” ’

“ ‘ Here he is, and now who is to pay us for our work ? We have paddled all night long. The canoe we borrowed. Its owner said that it gains twenty cents a day, and we want forty cents each, for we have paddled hard to save this Mister.’ Then they stood silent, scratching the mosquito bites upon their ankles with the other naked foot—a link between the *Homo sapiens* and some other intermediate species, long extinct.

“ I paid them, giving them something over what they demanded, and they put on that expression of entire aloofness which the Indian usually assumes on such occasions, either because thanks stick in his gullet, or he thinks

REDEEMED

no thanks are due after a service rendered. They then went off to drink a glass or two of rum before they started on their journey home.

"I went to see the body, which lay covered with a sack under a little shed. Flies buzzed about it, and already a faint smell of putrefaction reminded one that man is as the other animals, and that the store of knowledge he piles up during his life does not avail to stop the course of Nature, any more than if he had been an orang-outang."

He paused, and, after having lit the cigarette, strolled to the bulwark of the steamer, which had now got into the middle of the stream, and then resumed :

"Living as I do in the woods collecting orchids, the moralising habit grows upon one. It is, as it were, the only answer that a man has to the aggressiveness of Nature.

"I stood and looked at the man's body in his thin linen suit which clung to every angle. Beside him was a white pith helmet, and a pair of yellow-tinted spectacles framed in celluloid to look like tortoiseshell, that come down from the States. I never wear them, for I find that everything that you can do without is something gained in life.

"His feet in his white canvas shoes all stained with mud sticking up stiffly and his

ANIMULA VAGULA

limp, pallid hands, crossed by the pious Indians, on his chest gave him that helpless look that makes a dead man, as it were, appeal to one for sympathy and protection against the terror, that perhaps for him is not a terror after all ; but merely a long rest.

“ No one had thought of closing his blue eyes ; and as we are but creatures of habit after all, I put my hand into my pocket, and taking out two half-dollar pieces was about to put them on his eyes. Then I remembered that one of them was bad, and you will not believe me, but I could not put the bad piece on his eyes ; it looked like cheating him. So I went out and got two little stones, and after washing them put them upon his eyelids, and at least they kept away the flies.

“ I don’t know how it was, for I believe I am not superstitious, but it seemed to me that those blue eyes, sunk in the livid face to which a three or four days’ growth of fair and fluffy beard gave a look of adolescence, looked at me as if they still were searching for the American doctor, who no doubt must have engrossed his last coherent thought as he lay in the canoe.

“ As I was looking at him, mopping my face, and now and then killing a mosquito—one

REDEEMED

gets to do it quite mechanically, although in my case neither mosquitoes nor any other kind of bug annoys me very much—the door was opened and the authorities came in. After the usual salutations—which in Colombia are long and ceremonious, with much unnecessary offering of services, which both sides know will never be required—they said they came to view the body and take the necessary steps ; that is, you know, to try to find out who he was and have him buried, for which, the heat at forty centigrade, no time was to be lost.

“ A stout Colombian dressed in white clothes, which made his swarthy skin look darker still, giving him, as it were, the air of a black beetle dipped in milk, was the first to arrive. Taking off his flat white cap and gold-rimmed spectacles—articles which in Colombia are certain signs of office—he looked a little at the dead man and said, ‘ He was an English or American.’ Then turning to a soldier who had arrived upon the scene, he asked him where the Indian paddlers were who had brought in the canoe.

“ The man went out to look for them, and the hut soon was crowded full of Indians, each with his straw hat held up before his mouth. They gazed upon the body, not sympathetically, nor yet unsympathetically,

ANIMULA VAGULA

but with that baffling look that Indians must have put on when first the conquerors appeared amongst them and they found out their arms did not avail them for defence. By means of it they pass through life as relatively unscathed as it is possible for men to do, and by its help they seem to conquer death, taking away its sting, by their indifference.

"None of them said a word, but stared at the dead man, just as they stare at any living stranger, until I felt that the dead eyes would turn in anger at them and shake off the flat stones.

"The man clothed in authority and dusky white returned, accompanied by one of those strange out-at-elbows nondescripts who are to be found in every town in South America, and may be best described as 'penmen'—that is, persons who can read and write and have some far-off dealings with the law. After a whispered conversation the Commissary, turning to the assembled Indians, asked them in a brief voice if they had found the paddlers of the canoe. None of them answered, for a crowd of Indians will never find a spokesman, as each one fears to be made responsible if he says anything at all. A dirty soldier clothed in draggled khaki, barefooted, and with a rusty, sheathless bayonet banging on his thigh,

REDEEMED

opened the door and said that he knew where they were, but that they both were drunk. The soldier, after a long stare, would have retreated, but the Commissary, turning abruptly to him, said : ‘ José, go and see that a grave is dug immediately ; this “Mister” has been dead for several hours.’ Then looking at the ‘ penman,’ ‘ Perez,’ he said, ‘ we will now proceed to the examination of the dead man’s papers which the law prescribes.’

“ Perez, who in common with the majority of the uneducated of his race had a great dread of touching a dead body, began to search the pockets of the young man lying so still and angular in the drab-looking suit of white. To put off the dread moment he picked up the pith helmet and, turning out the lining, closely examined it. Then, finding nothing, in his agitation let it fall upon the chest of the dead man. I could have killed him, but said nothing, and we all stood perspiring, with the thermometer at anything you like inside that wretched hut, while Perez fumbled in the pockets of the dead man’s coat.

“ It seemed to me as if the unresisting body was somehow being outraged, and that the stiff, attenuated arms would double up and strike the miserable Perez during his terrifying

ANIMULA VAGULA

task. He was so clumsy and so frightened that it seemed an eternity till he produced a case of worn, green leather edged with silver, in which were several brown Havana cigarettes.

“ The Commissary gravely remarking, ‘ We all have vices, great or small, and smoking is but a little frailty,’ told Perez to write down ‘ Case, 1 ; cigarettes, 3,’ and then to go on with the search. ‘ The law requires,’ he said, ‘ the identification of all the dead wherever possible.

“ First, for its proper satisfaction in order that the Code of the Republic should be complied with ; and, secondly, for the consolation of the relations, if there are any such, or the friends of the deceased.’

“ Throughout the search the Indians stood in a knot, like cattle standing under a tree in summer-time, gathered together, as it were, for mutual protection, without uttering a word. The ragged soldier stared intently ; the Commissary occasionally took off his spectacles and wiped them ; and the perspiring Perez slowly brought out a pocket-knife, a box of matches, and a little bottle of quinine. They were all duly noted down, but still no pocket-book, card-case, letter, or any paper with the name of the deceased appeared to justify the search.

REDEEMED

Perez would willingly have given up the job ; but, urged on by his chief, at last extracted from an interior pocket a letter-case in alligator skin. Much frayed and stained with perspiration, yet its silver tips still showed that it had once been bought at a good shop.

“ ‘ Open it, Perez, for the law allows one in such cases to take steps that otherwise would be illegal and against that liberal spirit for which we in this Republic are so renowned in the Americas. Then hand me any card or letter that it may contain.’

“ Perez, with the air of one about to execute a formidable duty, opened the case, first slipping off a couple of elastic bands that held the flaps together. From it he took a bundle of American bank-notes wrapped up in tissue-paper, which he handed to his chief. The Commissary took it, and, slipping off the paper, solemnly counted the notes. ‘ The sum is just two thousand,’ he remarked, ‘ and all in twenties. Perez, take note of it, and give me any papers that you may have found.’ A closer search of every pocket still revealed nothing, and I breathed more freely, as every time the dirty hands of Perez fumbled about the helpless body I felt a shudder running down my back.

“ We all stood baffled, and the Indians

ANIMULA VAGULA

slowly filed out without a word, leaving the Commissary with Perez and myself standing bewildered by the bed. “ ‘Mister,’ ” the Commissary said to me ; ‘ what a strange case ! Here are two thousand dollars, which should go to some relation of this unfortunate young man.’

“ He counted them again, and, after having given them to his satellite, told him to take them and put them in his safe.

“ ‘ Now, “Mister,” I will leave you here to keep guard over your countryman whilst I go out to see if they have dug his grave. There is no priest here in the settlement. We only have one come here once a month ; and even if there were a priest, the dead man looks as if he had been Protestant.’

“ He turned to me, and saying, ‘ With your permission,’ took his hat and left the hut.

“ Thus left alone with my compatriot (if he had been one), I took a long look at him, so as to stamp his features in my mind. I had no camera in my possession, and cannot draw—a want that often hinders me in my profession in the description of my rarer plants.

“ I looked so long that if the man I saw lying upon that canvas scissor-bed should ever rise again with the same body, I am

certain I could recognise him amongst a million men.

" His hands were long and thin, but sunburnt, his feet well shaped, and though his face was sunken and the heat was rapidly discolouring it, the features were well cut. I noted a brown mark upon the cheek, such as in Spanish is called a 'lunar,' which gave his delicate and youthful face something of a girlish look, in spite of his moustache. His eyebrows, curiously enough, were dark, and the incipient growth of beard was darker than his hair. His ears were small and set on close to the head—a sign of breeding—and his eyes, although I dared not look at them, having closed them up myself, I knew were blue, and felt they must be staring at me, underneath the stones. In life he might have weighed about ten stone I guess, not more, and must have been well-made and active, though not an athlete, I should think, by the condition of his hands.

" Strangely enough, there seemed to me nothing particularly sad about the look of him. He just was resting after the struggle, that could have lasted in his case but little more than thirty years, and had left slight traces on his face of anything that he had suffered when alive.

ANIMULA VAGULA

" I took the flat stones off his eyes, and was relieved to find they did not open, and after smoothing his fair hair down a little and taking a long look at the fast-altering features I turned away to smoke.

" How long I waited I cannot recollect, but all the details of the hut, the scissor canvas bed on which the body lay, the hooks for hammocks in the mud-and-bamboo walls, the tall brown jar for water, like those that one remembers in the pictures of the *Arabian Nights* in childhood, the drinking gourd beside it, with the two heavy hardwood chairs of ancient Spanish pattern, seated and backed with pieces of raw hide, the wooden table, with the planks showing the marks of the adze that fashioned them, I never shall forget.

" Just at the door there was an old canoe, dug out of a tree-trunk, the gunwale broken and the inside almost filled up with mud. Chickens, of that peculiar mangy-looking breed indigenous to every tropic the whole world over, were feeding at one end of it, and under a low shed thatched with soft palm-leaves stood a miserable horse, whose legs were raw owing to the myriads of horseflies that clustered on them, which no one tried to brush away. Three or four vultures sat on a branch

REDEEMED

of a dead tree that overhung the hut. Their languid eyes appeared to me to pierce the palm-tree roof as they sat on, just as a shark follows a boat in which there is a dead man, waiting patiently.

" Over the bluff, on which the wretched little Rancheria straggled till it was swallowed up in the primeval woods, flowed the great river, majestic, yellow, alligator-haunted, bearing upon its ample bosom thousands of floating masses of green vegetation which had slipped into the flood.

" How long I sat I do not know, and I shall never know, but probably not above half an hour. Still, in that time I saw the life of the young man who lay before me. His voyage out ; the first sight of the tropics ; the landing into that strange world of swarthy-coloured men, dank vegetation, thick, close atmosphere, the metallic hum of insects, and the peculiar smell of a hot country—things which we see and hear once in our lives, and but once only, for custom dulls the senses, and we see nothing more. Then the letters home, simple and child-like in regard to life, but shrewd and penetrating as regards business, after the fashion of the Northern European or his descendants in the United States.

ANIMULA VAGULA

I saw him pass his first night in the bare tropical hotel, under a mosquito-curtain, and then wake up to all the glory of the New World he had discovered for himself, as truly as Columbus did when he had landed upon Guanahani on that eventful Sunday morning and unfurled the flag of Spain. I heard him falter out his first few words in broken Spanish, and saw him take his first walk, either by the harbour, thronged with its unfamiliar-looking boats piled up with fish and fruits unknown in Europe, or through the evil-smelling, badly-paved alleys in the town.

"The voyage up the river, with the first breath of the asphyxiating heat; the flocks of parrots; the alligators, so like dead logs, all basking in the sun; the stopping in the middle of the night for wood beside some landing-place cut in the jungle, where men, naked but for a cloth tied round their loins, ran up a plank and dumped their load down with a half-sigh, half-yell—I saw and heard it all. Then came the arrival at the mine or rubber station, the long and weary days, the fevers, the rare letters, and the cherished newspapers from home—those, too, I knew of, for I had waited for them often in my youth.

"Most of all, as I looked on him and saw

REDEEMED

his altering features, I thought of his snug home in Massachusetts or Northumberland, where his relations looked for letters on thin paper, with the strange postmarks, which would never come again. How they would wonder in his home, and here was I looking at the features that they would give the world to see, but impotent to help."

He stopped, and, walking to the bulwarks, looked up the river, and said : "In half an hour we shall arrive at San Fulgencio. . . . They came and fetched the body, and wrapped it in a white cotton sheet—for which I paid—and we set off, followed by the few store-keepers, two Syrians and a Portuguese, and a small crowd of Indians.

" There was no cemetery—that is to say, not one of those Colombian cemeteries fenced with barbed wire, in which the plastered gateway looks like an afterthought, and where the iron crosses blistering in the sun look drearier than any other crosses in the world.

" Under a clump of Guáduas—that is the name they give to the bamboo—there was a plot of ground fenced in with canes. In it the grave was dug amongst some others, on which a mass of grass and weeds was growing, as if it wished to blot them out from memory as soon as possible.

ANIMULA VAGULA

"A little wooden cross or two, with pieces of white paper periodically renewed, affirmed that Resurrecion Venegas or Exaltacion Machuca reposed beneath the weeds.

"The grave looked hard and uninviting, and as we laid him in it, lowering him with a rope made of lianas, two or three macaws flew past, uttering a raucous cry.

"The Commissary had put on a black suit of clothes, and Perez had a rusty band of cloth pinned round his arm. The Syrians and the Portuguese took off their hats, and as there was no priest the Commissary mumbled some formula ; and I, advancing to the grave, took a last look at the white sheet which showed the angles of the frail body underneath it, but for the life of me I could not say a word, except 'Good-bye.'

"When the Indians had filled in the earth we all walked back towards the settlement perspiring. I took a glass of rum with them, just for civility . . . I think I paid for it . . . and then I gathered up my traps and sat and waited under a big Bongo-tree until the steamer came along."

A silence fell upon us all, as sitting in our rocking-chairs upon the high deck of the stern-wheel steamer, we mused instinctively upon the fate of the unknown young English-

man, or American. The engineer from Oregon, the Texan cow-puncher going to look at cattle in the Llanos de Bolivar, and all the various waifs and strays that get together upon a voyage up the Magdalena, no doubt each thought he might have died, just as the unknown man had died, out in the wilderness.

No one said anything, until the orchid-hunter, as the steamer drew into the bank, said : "That is San Fulgencio. I go ashore here. If any of you fellows ever find out who the chap was, send us a line to Barranquilla ; that's where my wife lives.

"I am just off to the Choco, a three or four months' job. . . . Fever ?—oh, yes, sometimes, of course, but I think nothing of it. . . . Quinine ?—thanks, yes, I've got it. . . . I don't believe in it a great deal. . . . Mosquitoes ? . . . no, they do not worry me. A gun ? . . . well, no, I never carry arms . . . thanks all the same. . . . I was sorry, too, for that poor fellow ; but, after all, it is the death I'd like to die myself. . . . No, thanks, I don't care for spirits. . . . Good-bye to all of you."

We waved our hands and crowded on the steamer's side, and watched him walking up the bank to where a little group of Indians

ANIMULA VAGULA

stood holding a bullock with a pack upon its back.

They took his scanty property and, after tying it upon the ox, set off at a slow walk along a little path towards the jungle, with the grey figure of our late companion walking quietly along, a pace or two behind.

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

RIGHT in the middle of a ride cut in the woods, a ride he must have shot and ridden over a thousand times, under a great grass mound, looking like an ancient tumulus of some prehistoric chief, sleeps Wilfrid Blunt.

Sweet chestnuts, birches, and scrub-oak trees fringe the ride. Under their branches is a row of yew-trees, planted by himself. In future years, when they are tall and dark, they will stand sentinels in a long line on each side of the grave, and in the winter nights the owls will sit amongst their branches, calling and answering one another, a nightly threnody.

Thistles and tufts of campion, dog's mercury, and enchanter's nightshade grow so thickly that they carpet all the grass. Rabbits limp noiselessly across the open ride ; in the keen east wind the autumn leaves shiver down, mottled and red and golden yellow ; silence broods over the whole wood, although the house is not three hundred yards away.

After his agitated life, in which he played so many parts, sculptor and poet, traveller, lover, politician, diplomat, and man of fashion,

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

and at the last a Sussex squire, loving the trees, the speech and people of his native place above all things on earth, he lies at rest.

The old-world Jacobean house with its yew hedges, paths of broken flags, and steps that lead to the front door, between whose crevices spring tufts of ragweed, garlanded by a thick growth of traveller's joy clinging to the balustrade, is empty and forlorn ; but over all, in everything, still lingers and will linger many a day the traces of his strange, complex personality. So that, although the shrine is empty, the spirit haunts it, and, after all the spirit, not the body of the saint, makes the shrine sacred to the true adept.

So strong is the impression of the vanished owner stamped, that when you see the old familiar objects hanging in the stone hall, the peacock's skin, the Arab saddle bags, the lazo and the bolas, the mameluke bits, and the great brass coffee-pots disposed about the walls, it seems impossible that in the panelled room you will not see the figure of the squire dressed in his Arab clothes, his full white beard spread like a Viking's on his chest, reading a ponderous tome in vellum, seated by a fire of logs piled in a Sussex grate.

The Morris tapestry, the great oak tables, the newelled staircase with its door across the

REDEEMED

landing, the priest's secret chamber, the prints of horses, horses, and still more horses, from the Godolphin Arab down to his own Mesaud, hang on the walls.

All is unchanged ; the Darnley Arab, and the spotted Polish stallion, with the old French print of the execution of the spy, who puts aside his dog with his left hand to save it from the bullets, a print on which its owner never looked without a pang, they all are there.

The thick yew hedges, and the Attar roses growing between old lines of box in the walled garden outside the dining-room, and the innumerable weather-boarded sheds and barns that cluster round the house, seem full of something that is no longer there, yet still pervades the atmosphere as strongly as in life.

If in all England there is a house that is the embodiment of him who owned it, the little Jacobean mansion with its lichenized walls, its stone-slabbed roof, its air as of a camp, inside, and outside, of an age when men built slowly, to please the eye and to defy the assaults of time, Newbuildings is the place.

The piles of Arab blankets in the corners of the rooms, the newest books and magazines upon the tables, speak of a man who touched

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

life at a hundred points. Although so various, still at the core a country gentleman, a mighty lover of good horses, and breeding many of them from his famed Arab stud, yet not a country gentleman who brought London to the country after the modern way, but one who lived much as his forefathers lived for generations back.

Withal, as Easterns say, a great protector of the poor ; not over much concerned about their rights, but sympathising heartily with their wrongs and with their poverty. Amongst the mass of mediocrities that constitute, have constituted, and will for ever constitute mankind, unless there is a new creation conceived upon a different plan, he moved amongst his fellow-men, somewhat aloof and unapproachable, lashing their base ambitions with a steel whip, and yet with many a foible of his own, for without weaknesses no man can be strong.

Born out of his generation, as are the most of men who achieve anything but mere material success, he yet was a true Englishman, a very Englishman of the Elizabethan breed, with something in him of the Renaissance in his love of sport and culture, a combination rare to-day, for now the sportsman is so often nothing but a sportsman, the man of culture nothing but a prig.

REDEEMED

Science, as manifested in the power to take a good, dull man by air to Baghdad and bring him back again an ignoramus still, with but the local ulcer in his cheek to show for it, left him, I fancy, all unmoved.

Culture to him, as to the Orientals, with whom he lived so much and sympathised so deeply, was an affair of spirit and of mind not to be measured by material progress, or, even by the arts. An Arab with his simple life, his scanty fare of dates and coarse bread toasted on the embers, and his perpetual speculations on the attributes of God, was a far greater object of his admiration than is the modern plutocrat, living in luxury and paying thousands for a picture that he is ordered to admire, without a thought beyond materialism.

He held the greater portion of the ills to which humanity is heir are irremediable, and that the best mankind can do is to endure them silently, trusting in Allah's mercy and compassion, without expecting that he will alter nature's laws on our behoof.

No man was ever less a Pagan or a Hellenist than was this cultured English gentleman, with his love of adventure and his deep sympathy for the oppressed in every portion of the world.

In type of body and of mind he was essen-

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

tially a northerner, except that he detested compromise, so dear to northerners, as fervently as any member of the Latin race.

Bread was bread, verily, to him, and wine was wine ; the two could never mix their essences and become the hotch-potch dear to politicians, and hence the secret of his aloofness from our public life, failure to comprehend it, and its amazement at his attitude. At the same time, there never lived a man more fitted to enjoy and understand all that was best in English country life, for he loved hospitality, enjoyed a gallop on the downs, or a hot corner in the woods, as much as any chuckle-headed Sussex squire of the whole neighbourhood. I cannot see him seated on the bench at Quarter Sessions ; but if he ever went there I am sure his sympathies were with the poachers and the tramps, being himself a sportsman and a super-tramp, taking the whole world as his beat.

Something there was of the Old Testament in his mental bias, either inherited or perhaps superinduced by his long intercourse with the Arabs, the most biblical of men.

Thus in the fine old house plenished with Chippendale and Jacobean furniture, devoid of most of the appliances of modern life, surrounded by his slow-witted Sussex dependents,

REDEEMED

who all adored him, seeing his real kindness of heart beneath a somewhat stern exterior, he seemed a paradox.

His quiet surroundings, the unbroken calm in the old, solitary house, disturbed but by the cooing of the fantail pigeons in the yard as they sat sunning themselves before their doors in the barrel stuck up on a pole, the smell of elder flowers that the breeze now and then wafted through open windows (scawen, he used to say, was Cornish for an elder), all spoke of rural England, that rural England that has almost disappeared. It was his pride to keep the old-world air about his mansion-house, although his thoughts must have so often wrapped him in the travellers' melancholy, and now and then he must have wished to feel the sun burning between his shoulders, to hear the gurgling of the kneeling camels and the shrill neighing of the horses, tethered and picketed.

If he occasionally let his thoughts stray towards the East and longed to smell the acrid scent of the camp-fire of camels' dung, he kept his counsel, for no man ever wore his heart less on his sleeve than he did, knowing the world is full of jackdaws, and that when hearts lie open, they delight to peck at them.

Still to his house there came a never-ending

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

string of pilgrims, Arabs and Persians, Turks, Indians, and all sorts and kinds more or less materialised dwellers in Mesopotamia, generally each with his tale of woe and of oppression, real or fancied, and all with open palms.

Long hours he listened to them, for he was surely born in Tarshish in the next house to the Apostle of the Gentiles, suffering fools, if not gladly, at least patiently, and, I imagine, dealing out largesse with an unsparing hand.

If he believed all that they told him is difficult to say ; but possibly his passion for the liberty of down-trodden nationalities, and his hatred of imperialism, sometimes rendered him their prey.

Certain it is that almost all that he foretold in regard to the East thirty or forty years ago, has become justified by events.

His was a voice as of a Cassandra prophesying in the wilderness, in the days when he warned England that Egypt would be free, that Ireland would become a nation, and that our Indian Empire was seething with revolt.

Had he been listened to, the measures that have been wrung from us by force would have been graciously bestowed ; but then who looks for vision in a statesman or a man of business and does not find himself deceived ?

REDEEMED

Little by little he withdrew from public life, leaving a world that had not understood him, and that he himself had often failed to understand, for your keen intellect and piercing vision often betray their owner, making him see the mirage floating in the air so clearly that he fails to catch the string of camels plodding laboriously through the sand, as his eye dwells on the castles and the towers so soon to be dissolved.

Sussex eventually claimed him for its own, and though his active mind was always occupied with Eastern politics, his stud and his estate, the welfare of his tenants and all the engrossing details of a country life enmeshed him, as they always have enmeshed men of his class and race in their declining years.

His house became, as it were, a place of pilgrimage to which young poets, rising politicians, breeders of Arab horses coming from many lands, and his old friends resorted, to revel in his pungent conversation, receive advice, to buy a horse occasionally and to be received with the large hospitality worthy of one who had been so long a dweller in the tents.

No man gave forth more freely of the best he had at his command, and years and travel,

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

with an enormous store of miscellaneous reading, had made his mind a very granary of recondite information that he was always ready to impart.

Modest about his own achievements, to the point that few of his old friends had ever heard of the recumbent statue of his brother wrought with his own hands, in Crawley Priory, he seldom talked about his Eastern journeys except to intimates, and even then quite unassumingly. Time will do him justice, for time alone holds a judicial scale between a man and the warped judgments of his contemporaries.

His weaknesses will be forgotten. Your petty minds only see petty objects. Genius is far beyond their purview.

Fame surely will reserve a niche for the tall figure in its Arab clothes, that for so many years moved through the panelled rooms in the old Jacobean house, pausing to take a book up now and then, or to adjust a bunch of the many-coloured asters in which he took such pride, and always followed by a Blenheim spaniel or by a King Charles.

His pilgrimage is over, all his activities are stilled. His love of justice and the clear vision he enjoyed into the causes of events that have of late shaken all England to the

REDEEMED

core, will be remembered, and his *Love Sonnets* take their just place beside the works of the long line of English makers whose names are chronicled in gold.

Now in the Sussex earth that he so loved he rests in his last camp. In the long ride in the deep woods winds stir the trees ; the sun pours down in summer, and in the winter the snow spreads its mantle on the grass. It is all as he wished it should be, for it would please him if he knew that in the moonlight rabbits came out to play around his grave, and that the owls fly silently over his resting-place and light upon the trees as noiselessly as snowflakes light upon the ground.

If there are things we shall remember after we are dead, as he himself sang in his verses on the Pampa, he will remember these. His Eastern wanderings, the strife of politics, his agitated life with all its friendships and its bickerings will fade away ; but as he lies face upwards to the stars, he will remember, perhaps perceive, with some new sense unknown to those who labour in the flesh, all that is passing round him. The summer sun, the frost that cracks the trees at night, making the moping birds sit miserable, waiting for the dawn ; the fierce north wind, the hoar frost

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

on the leaves coating them with a translucent panoply of fairy scales ; the changing seasons, the recurring miracle of day and night, the moon's cold rays, the Pleiades, Orion and his belt ; all the familiar constellations, the Pole Star, and Sohail, that he must have gazed at often as he lay awake camped in the desert, all the continual marvel of the growth of vegetation, he will remember. At least I hope so ; and if he cannot see them as they pass around him, just as they passed in life, oblivion, the best gift the gods have to bestow, will bring him peace at last.

LONG WOLF

INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY KERMIT ROOSEVELT

MY interest in Mr. Cunningham Graham's writings was first aroused through reading the dedication in Mr. W. H. Hudson's delightful collection of short stories, gathered under the title *El Ombu*. It runs as follows :

To MY FRIEND
R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM
(*"Singularísimo Escritor Ingles"*)

Who has lived with and knows (even to the marrow as they would themselves say) the horsemen of the Pampas, and who alone of European writers has rendered something of the vanishing colour of that remote life.

My father had been for many years an eager reader of all that Mr. Cunningham Graham wrote, and I well remember his appreciation of the following letter which he received from him shortly after Buffalo Bill's death :

LONG WOLF

" March 27th, 1917.

" Cartagena de Indias,
Colombia.

" The Honourable,
Colonel Theodore Roosevelt.

" DEAR COLONEL ROOSEVELT :

" I saw by chance to-day in *Harper's Magazine* that a national monument is to be raised to my old friend Colonel Cody ; that it is to take the form of a statue of himself on horseback (I hope the horse will be old Buckskin Joe), that he is to be looking out over the North Platte, and that you have kindly consented to receive subscriptions for it.

" When Cody and I were both young I remember him at the Horsehead Crossing, in or about the year 1880 I think, and subsequently saw him next year with the first germs of his great show in San Antonio de Bejar, Texas. (God bless Western Texas, as we used to say in those days—it is a thirsty land.)

" Cody was a picturesque character, a good fellow (I hope the story of his game of poker on his death-bed is not apocryphal), and a delightful figure on horseback. How well I can see him on his beautiful grey horse in the show !

" Every American child should learn at school the history of the conquest of the West.

REDEEMED

"The names of Kit Carson, of General Custer and of Colonel Cody should be as household words to them. These men as truly helped to form an empire as did the Spanish Conquistadores.

"Nor should Sitting Bull, the Short Wolf, Crazy Horses and Rain-in-the-Face be forgotten.

"They too were Americans, and showed the same heroic qualities as did their conquerors.

"I would not have Captain Jim of the Modocs fall into oblivion either.

"All of these men, and they were men of the clearest grit, as no one knows better than yourself, were actors in a tremendous drama, set in such surroundings as the world never saw before, or will see again.

"*Anch' io son pittore*, that is to say, I too knew the buffalo, the Apaches, and the other tribes of the Rio Grande.

"May I then trouble you with my obolus, a cheque for £20 towards the national monument to Buffalo Bill?

"I envy him his burial-place.

"May the statue long stand looking out over the North Platte.

"If in another world there is any riding—and God forbid that I should go to any

LONG WOLF

heaven in which there are no horses—I cannot but think that there will be a soft swishing as of the footsteps of some invisible horse heard occasionally on the familiar trails over which the equestrian statue is to look.

“ Believe me, dear Colonel Roosevelt,

“ Yours most sincerely,

“ R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.

“ P.S.—I congratulate you most heartily on the force which you are raising. It is like you, and if I had been blindfolded and asked who was raising such a force, I should have answered unanimously, Teddy Roosevelt.

“ After eleven months in the Argentine, buying horses for the British Government, I am at present in Colombia on a mission connected with cattle, on the same account.

“ R. B. C. G.”

I thought at the time that here was the writer that could make Buffalo Bill and his era live and speak and act for our children and our children's children. After the Armistice I made the suggestion, and it was at first favourably received, but upon thinking it over Mr. Cunninghamame Graham decided that, since his roaming in North America and participation in our frontier life had been

REDEEMED

largely confined to our South-West and to Mexico, he did not feel inclined to take up a work which would necessarily deal largely with the bleak frozen winters of the North-West, to which he was a stranger.

Accompanying his final decision, as a grateful earnest of his interest, and appreciation of the West, he sent the following sketch, which, instead of reconciling us to the decision, can only serve to make us regret it the more.

KERMIT ROOSEVELT.

LONG WOLF

In a lone corner of a crowded London cemetery, just at the end of a smoke-stained, Greco-Roman colonnade, under a poplar tree, nestles a neglected grave.

The English climate has done its worst upon it. Smoke, rain, and then more smoke, and still more rain, the fetid breath of millions, the fumes of factories, the reek of petrol rising from little Stygian pools on the wood pavements, the frost, the sun, the decimating winds of spring, have honeycombed the headstone, leaving it pitted as if with small-pox, or an old piece of parchment that has long moulded in a chest.

Upon the stone is cut the name of Long

LONG WOLF

Wolf and an inscription setting forth he died in 1892 in Colonel Cody's Show. Years he had numbered fifty-nine. The legend says he was chief—I think a chief of the Ogalla Sioux, if memory does not play me false.

In high relief upon the cross, our emblem of salvation, a wolf is sculptured, the emblem of the tutelary beast he probably chose for himself in youth, during his medicine fast. It may have been that the name grew from some exploit or some incident in early life. Most probably the long wolf meant more to him than did the cross that Colonel Cody has erected over his dead friend and comrade in the wild life they understood so well. If the Long Wolf resents it, they can discuss the matter where they now ride—for that they ride, perhaps some Bronco Pegasus, I feel certain, as heaven would be no heaven to them if they were doomed to walk.

From whence the Long Wolf came so far, to lay his bones in the quiet corner of the Brompton Cemetery where now he sleeps, that is to me unknown, as absolutely as the fair field where the fledged bird had flown was to the poet. All that I know is that the bird was fledged, flew for some nine-and-fifty years, and now rests quietly in his forgotten grave.

REDEEMED

The tombstones stand up, white in marble, grey in granite, and smoke-defiled when cut in common stone. They stand like soldiers, all in serried rows. The occupiers of the graves beneath them sleep on undisturbed by railway whistle or motor-horn, by blasts of steam, by factory sirens, or the continuous rumble of our Babylon. These were familiar sounds to them in life. If they could wake and should not hear them, their ears would pine for what had filled them all their lives. Upon each stone is set the name and age and virtues of its occupant. A pious text informs the world that a devoted wife and mother died in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection. All charitable folk will hope her faith has been rewarded in the empyrean that she now inhabits, just as her virtue was rewarded here on earth, for to be forty years a devoted wife and mother is its own reward.

A little farther off, a general, his battles over, reposes in his warrior's cloak. He needs it, for the white marble makes a chilly couch in our high latitude. A champion sculler, with his marble boat and broken sculls, has gained his prize. A pugilist is cut in stone in fighting attitude, and farther off there sleeps a publican.

Men, women, children, gentle and simple, poets and statesmen, soldiers, sailors, and solid

LONG WOLF

merchants, once held in honour upon Change, young girls, wives, husbands, mothers, fathers, and representatives of every age and class of man, take their repose under the dingy grass. Their very multitude surely must give them some protection, and a sense of fellowship . . . for they all died in the same faith, with common speech and aspiration, in their own fatherland.

Under the poplar-tree, its leaves just falling, golden in the autumn frost, there lies a wilding. No one is near with whom in the long nights of rain and winter he can exchange a word.

The prosperous citizens, in their well-cared-for tombs, with their trim beds above them often gay with flowers, even in death appear to look askance at the new Christian, with his wolf above the cross. No one to place even a bunch of violets on his grave, although the pious hand that buried him, perhaps in foresight of the loneliness certain to overtake the Long Wolf, lost in the thick ranks of palefaces, has placed in two glass cases (one of them is cracked) some artificial pansies—perhaps for thought, perhaps for recollection—all is one, for thought and recollection fade into one another almost insensibly.

On what forgotten creek, in what lost corner

REDEEMED

of the Dakotas, where once his race lorded it over buffalo and mustang, the Long Wolf first saw light, I have as little knowledge as of the composition of the mysterious thing that gave him life, accompanied him throughout his days, and then departed into the nothingness from whence it came.

I see the teepees set by the river's side, with the thin smoke that rises from the Indians' parsimonious fire curling out through the poles. The wolfish-looking dogs lie sleeping at the lee side of them ; children play in the sun the strange and quiet games that Indian children play. Out on the prairie feed the horses under guard. Amongst these quiet children Long Wolf must have played, lassoed the dogs, or shot his little arrows at the birds. From his youth upward he must have been a rider patient and painstaking as the Indians are with horses, without the dash and fire that characterise the Western men and Mexicans.

At seventeen or eighteen, when he had assumed the name that now so strangely differentiates him from all those with whom he lies, he must have taken part in many a war-party. Upon the trail, strung out in a long line, he must have ridden with the other braves, silent and watchful, holding the horse-

LONG WOLF

hair bridle with the high, light touch that every Indian has by nature and so few Europeans can acquire. He must have suffered hunger, thirst, fatigue, and all the dangers incidental to the life of those days on the plains long ere the railroad crossed them and when the buffalo migrated annually, in countless thousands, followed by the attendant packs of wolves. What his adventures were, how many scalps he took, and what atrocities he saw committed, only he himself could tell and Indians keep no diaries except in memory.

Little by little, as the West was day by day invaded by the whites, the buffalo grew scarcer and game was difficult to kill, he and the tribe would find their means of livelihood filched from them and their position insecure. Whether the chief took part in the great fight upon the Little Big Horn, or later joined the Ghost Dancers in their pathetic struggle, is a sealed book to all but him who brought the Long Wolf over in his company, and he has joined the chief on the last trail.

It is best perhaps we should know nothing, for, after all, what most concerns those who pass by his grave, rendered more lonely than if it had been dug out on the prairie, by the

R E D E E M E D

crowd of monuments of alien folk who crowd about it, is that he lies there, waiting for the last war-whoop, uncared-for and alone.

Whether his children, if he had any, talk of his death in the strange city, buried in fog and gloom, so vast and noisy, with its life so circumscribed by customs and by laws, remains a problem never to be solved. How and of what disease he died is long forgotten by the men who pass his tombstone so unheedingly. His spirit may have returned to the region of the Red Pipestone Quarry, or ride in some wild heaven, where buffalo are ever plentiful, grass green, and water ever running, that the Creator of the Indians must have prepared for them, as he is all-wise and merciful.

It may be that it still haunts hovering above the grave under the poplar-tree. I like to think, when all is hushed in the fine summer nights, and even London sleeps, that the wolf carved on the tomb takes life upon itself, and in the air resounds the melancholy wild cry from which the sleeper took his name.

'Twould be mere justice ; but as justice is so scarce on earth, that it may well be rare even in heaven, 'twere better ears attuned to the light footfall of the unshod cayuse and the soft swishing of the lodge-poles through

LONG WOLF

the grass behind the travois-pony should never open.

The long-drawn cry would only break the sleeper's rest, and wake him to a world unknown and unfamiliar, where he would find no friends except the sculptured wolf.

Let him sleep on.

OROPESA

OUT of the immensity of the Castilian steppe, there rises, just on the confines of Estremadura and Toledo, an old brown town crowned by a feudal castle with its crenellated walls. The town must have grown round the castle, as the Dukes of Frias and of Escalona, Counts of Oropesa and of Haro, settled their vassals for protection in the long feud with the neighbouring Counts of Maqueda, just such another little town crowned by a castle, now mouldering to decay.

Time has swallowed up their rivalry ; but the Castilian plain has defied time and in the autumn still keeps the character given to it in ages past in the old saying, “Even a lark when it goes to Castile must take its food with it.” Little is altered on the great plain on which the sun plays like a fire. When all the waving wheat-fields are cut and threshed it is converted into a European Sahara. Dried thistles and the stalks of mullein desiccated in the fierce heat alone stand up to break its surface, taking on strange, fantastic

OROPESA

shapes and looming up like dead, gigantic trees, seen in the mirage of the noonday sun. Time has done nothing either to the long strings of hooded carts, each drawn by a line of horses or of mules, led by a donkey and accompanied by a fierce yellow dog. Stretching across the plains, they wend their way through heat and dust, like trains of camels in the desert, their drivers either asleep inside the carts, or seated on the youngest of the mules, with the strange pretext that its legs grow stronger if it carries weight upon its back.

Villages built of sun-dried bricks rise here and there out of the plain, each with its church large enough for a considerable town. In the deserted streets pigs stray, and at the doors, sheltering against the walls to seek the shade, stand donkeys and an occasional mule, fastened to iron rings or wooden hooks driven between the bricks. Silence, a silence compounded of isolation and of heat, for the air shimmers and seems to flicker, broods over everything, and through the clouds of dust upon the roads pass carts and still more carts, and donkeys with men sitting sideways on their backs. Now and again a solitary horseman rides past at the Castilian pace, perched high upon his Moorish saddle,

REDEEMED

his feet encased in shovel-shaped iron stirrups, the thick, white dust deadening his wiry little horse's footfalls as effectually as if it had been snow.

Far off, the Sierra of the Gredos, its jagged outline cutting the sky at sunset into teeth, connects the Sierra de Guadarrama with that of Guadalupe and gives the plains a look of an evaporated sea, as desolate as those that seem to lie between the mountains in the moon. Dry rivers only marked by sheets of dazzling white stones, where in the winter rages a torrent, only serve to make the landscape still more African. Upon their banks, despite the universal dryness, long lines of rushes still preserve their greenness, and an occasional white poplar stands up and like a palm-tree challenges the sun. Small flocks of sheep crouch with their heads all close together, seeking shade from one another, and a few fierce, black bullocks find a precarious pasturage among the stubble of the wheat-fields, guarded by men dressed in brown dusty clothes, their great black hats drawn down over the handkerchiefs with which they bind their heads. They stand as motionless as the dried thistles, milestones upon the path of time, stretching back to the patriarchal ages, when their ancestors must have kept

sheep and cattle on the self-same plains, dressed in the same brown rags and leaning on their leaden quarter-staves, with their slings wrapped around their waists. Well did the Roman writer epitomise the land in the phrase, *Dura tellus Iberiæ*, dry, thirsty, and sun-scoured, just as it is to-day. Only at sunset when the lights fading from a deep orange, by degrees turn violet and greenish grey upon the jagged peaks and granulated slopes of the Gredos, does an air of mystery creep over the vast expanse of plain, so clear and so material in the fierce light of day. Then the rare bushes take on fantastic shapes, making the traveller's horse snort and shy off from them, as if they really were the beasts of prey that they appear. When the brief twilight gives place to the inimitable sapphire of the Castilian night, and the stars shine out like diamonds set in blue enamel, no sound but the faint tinkle of some mule's bell passing on the road disturbs the solitude. As night wears on, the shifting constellations mark the passing hours. Shepherds and mule-drivers camp round their fires, as did the camel drivers in Yemen, when the Arabs first observed the stars and named them, Altair, Algor, Sohail, and Fomalhaut. The noon-day fire gives place to piercing cold, and in the

morning, when the sun rises, turns once again to heat.

These plains, with their hard climate and scant vegetation, their fierce white atmosphere, that precludes all sense of mystery, have produced a race of men hard, unimaginative, but honourable and simple, capable of bearing all the extremes of heat and cold, and all the miseries of life with equanimity. Their ancestors formed the famous Spanish infantry that followed Charles V, that emperor of light horsemen, and swept through Italy like a devouring flame. They froze in Flanders, and across the seas were the backbone of the scant legions of Pizarro and Cortes. The scarcity of water and the inherited sense of insecurity that had come down to them from the days when one village was inhabited by Christians and the next by Moors, who butchered one another for the love of God, imposed a mode of life upon them unique in Europe, and most likely in the world. No snug farm-houses, with their trees and granges, their lowing cattle and folded sheep at night, were ever seen on the Castilian plains.

Huddled in villages or in such little towns as Oropesa, the cultivators lived far from their fields. At daybreak, seated on their donkeys, carrying their wooden ploughs upon their

OROPESA

shoulders, they sallied forth to plough, to tend their scanty vines, or reap their corn. Their donkeys, hobbled, fed at the edges of the unfenced fields, picking up a thrifty livelihood. If they had oxen, they too were led out from the town. At noonday the cultivators ate a little bread and garlic, or a stew yellow with saffron, heated up in an earthen pipkin over a fire of thistle-stalks and bones. During their noonday siesta their patient oxen stood and ruminated, for luckily the angels did not often sweep down and goad them to their toil, what time their owner slumbered, as was the case with San Isidro Labrador, the patron of Madrid. Canonisation cannot have often been attained on easier terms, although it surely might have been bestowed more equitably on the oxen than on their owner, sleeping in the shade.

Over the plain the town of Oropesa and its castle brood. Its winding, ill-paved streets recall the Middle Ages or a town in Morocco or Algeria. In the great castle now turned to civic uses the Counts of Oropesa long held sway. Theirs was the right of *Horca y cuchillo*, gallows and sword, that corresponded to the pit and gallows of the Scottish nobles of the past. The title formed one of the group of titles held by the Dukes of Frias,

themselves as Counts of Haro having been created Grand Constables of Castile upon the field of Najera. One of the greatest of the families of Spain, the equals of the Osunas, Albas, and Medina Celis in point of rank and of antiquity, the whole town speaks of them. Their arms are everywhere ; on mouldering gateways and on the low-browed houses, over the castle drawbridge and on the doorway of the great church built by Herrera, the architect of the Escorial, and now an empty shell in which the archives of the house of Frias are left a prey to rats.

Hundreds of boxes bulging with papers fill a chapel. Deeds from the time of Juan II and Enrique IV ; the Catholic Kings, signed "I, the King" and "I, the Queen" ; deeds telling of the siege of Breda ; plans of the fortresses in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies ; letters from early Spanish navigators ; from Popes and Cardinals ; from the Emperor Charles V, Philip the Second, Don John of Austria, with Papal Bulls, Contracts of Marriage, Grants of Arms, and all the flotsam and the jetsam of a great feudal archive, whose owners have suffered by their incapacity to conform to the exigencies of a commercial age, lie scattered on the floor or are stored in great loosely tied-up packets, left carelessly

OROPESA

on shelves. Books in all languages ; rare first editions, mixed up with modern novels and with magazines, are piled up everywhere under the leaking roof, exposed to the fierce sun of summer and the winter rains that beat through windows destitute of glass. Books upon hunting, horsemanship, and hawking, such as Lopez de Ayala's *Aves de Caza*, and a first edition of Moreri's *Dictionary*, in twelve enormous tomes, lie cheek by jowl with first editions of Scott's novels, Byron's poems, and countless lives of saints. Great choir-books bound in leather stamped with the arms of the Dukes of Frias, their capital and initial letters finely illuminated, their pages set with miniatures of kings and emperors, lie heaped on one another in enormous piles. The children of the town, in conscience and tender heart, tear pages out of them when they want little lanterns for a festival. Their mothers now and then pull out a page or two of the first book that comes to hand, to wrap up groceries, giving a modern reading of the adage, "All take their firewood from the fallen tree."

At the east end of the great Græco-Roman church, behind the place where once stood the high altar, is an enormous picture by Juan Ricci. Our Lady, in the front plane,

receives the homages of two noblemen with just that little touch of sweetness in her smile and air of femininity that one generation in Castile had not quite banished from the Italian style. In contradiction to the Spanish taste, that even in Murillo's most sugary compositions hold no air of meretriciousness, but accentuates the peasant birth of our Lord's mother, Ricci portrays a lady with just that touch of good society about her virginhood that shows his origin and the date when he worked. Two or three personages who look too well attired for shepherds, stand, not in adoration, but with an air of being heavenly courtiers, who could at need turn a neat compliment. In its flamboyant frame of chestnut-wood that time, damp, and the sun that beats upon it almost directly, have scarcely harmed, the picture, finely painted as it is and worthy of a place in the Vatican when Alexander Borgia was Pope, yet seems a little out of place in the sad, stately aisle of the old Spanish church. Far better would a dark introspective saint by Zurbaran, or a grim martyrdom by José Ribera, with all the limbs of the poor victim twisted in agony, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, have fitted the air of desolation and neglect of the deserted fane. On the side altars, dusty and fly-blown images

O R O P E S A

of saints, sculptured in wood, and gilded, stand disconsolately, some of them still with rosaries hung round their necks by pious votaries before the church was given over to the owls and rats.

A picture of a Christ, bloody and realistic and realising to the full the Spanish saying, “To a bad Christ, much blood,” has almost faded off the panel that time and damp have cracked. Heaps of birds’ feathers lie beneath the dome, and from the organ-loft some of the pipes have fallen into the nave and serve for trumpets to the children in their games. Nothing of all the glory of the immense and stately church remains, except the air of melancholy grandeur that clings to everything in Spain, even though in decay. Pigeons and owls and bats are now the only congregation of the decaying church of the great family of Frias, once famous in the history of Spain.

Their castle on its rocky eminence above the church, though used as a town-hall and inhabited by the cacique of the district, still dominates the town that lies a maze of winding, ill-paved streets, full of old houses, with low horseshoe entrances, iron balconies, and coats of arms above the doors, all garnished with their hitching rings for mules. Castle and church and old brown mouldering town stand

REDEEMED

out so clearly that they appear fantastic in the clear atmosphere. Far off across the plain the Sierra de Gredos rears its serrated peaks, and as the evening sun turns them to pinnacles of jacinth, opal, amethyst, and jade, that by degrees melt into a faint blue, they appear mountains in some planet long extinct, whose shadow just has reached the earth.

LA VIRGEN DE LA CABEZA

ALL day the diligence from Baza to Granada had ploughed its way through heavy snow. At daylight, as it set out from Baza, the curious little town might just as well have been in Russia as in Spain. Long icicles hung from the heavy, red-tiled eaves of all the houses. The church towers looked like ornaments upon a wedding-cake, and in the plaza, the cannons with which the Catholic Kings besieged the place, that are preserved as monuments, were buried almost to their mouths. Outside the town the carts and trains of mules that fill all Spanish roads, as they have done for centuries, and will do, God willing, still for centuries, plodded along, just as they plodded in summer through the dust. Their drivers, muffled to the eyes in their striped blankets, trotted beside them, instead of sitting in their usual fashion, sideways on their backs.

The six apocalyptic horses, after a brief scuffling gallop, subsided to a gentle trot, then to a walk, their feet buried above the fetlocks

REDEEMED

in the light, powdery snow. The lumbering diligence swayed like a collier in a seaway, lurching to one side, then to another, following a boy who rode in front upon a mule to point out the best places in the road. The sun rose frostily, painting the distant sierra of the Alpujarras pink, but brought no heat with it. Now and then bits of the road, swept bare by the fierce winds, were sheeted thick with ice, so slippery that both the driver and his mate had to cut brushwood to strew upon it before the coach could pass. Occasionally, deep in the snow-laden pine woods, or from the recesses of the sierra, a wolf howled with that wild, marrow-curdling note, once heard never to be forgotten, especially if far from houses and alone. The horses knew it too, pricked up their ears, huddled a little closer to each other, and broke into a shambling trot for a few yards. At the post-houses in the wretched Alpujarra villages as the tired, sweating team was being changed, the passengers, benumbed and chilled, stamped about on the snow, smoking and drinking aguardiente after their meal of greasy sausages coloured with saffron, potato-soup, and the white flaky pastry that the Moors left in Spain.

Upon the frozen drinking-troughs, broken at one end with an axe to let the horses drink,

LA VIRGEN DE LA CABEZA

the women had thrown corn for the chickens, who ate it standing on the ice. Post-house succeeded post-house in the short winter's day, as in a nightmare of cold and misery. At last, just as the setting sun once more threw a faint flush upon the mountains, they reached a village in the hills. With the same satisfaction that a boatload of shipwrecked mariners may feel upon arriving at some wretched fishing village, the inmates of the diligence looked at the flickering light in the dark archway where they had drawn up with a jolt. "Any port in a storm," observed the driver. "Granada is still ten leagues away. Better to stay here and make penitence with Uncle Nicolas Rodriguez than to be frozen or be eaten by the wolves."

In the great kitchen before a fire of olive logs and brushwood the travellers gradually got their brains and bodies thawed. A huge iron pot swung in the chimney from a chain. Watching it, with their noses almost in the embers, lay several fierce dogs, their blood-shot eyes half open as they watched the travellers file in. All round the stone-floored vaulted room mule-drivers were either sitting on their packs or fast asleep, looking like corpses as they lay with their heads covered in their cloaks. A doorway always open, across

REDEEMED

the passage by which the diligence had entered the hotel, led to the stables where a long line of horses, mules, and donkeys munched their chopped straw and corn.

Men passed to and fro perpetually, either to part their fighting animals, who stood all touching one another, or to buy corn from Uncle Nicolas, which they took in a saddle blanket to their beasts. The mules and asses all stood saddled ; their packs so high and bulky that as you looked down the long line of animals they seemed like islands towering above their backs. The smell of mules and horses, mingling with the odour of the cooking and the clouds of tobacco smoke, produced that incense peculiar to all Spanish wayside inns.

Among the muleteers and other guests, for travellers were always dropping in, two country girls, short, broad, and merry-faced, their eyes as black as sloes, their hair as thick and as abundant as a Shetland pony's tail, attended to the cooking or fetched glasses of aguardiente amid the perpetual harshly screamed-out orders of the hostess. As they passed by the men they received a shower of quodlibets that might have disconcerted girls less used to them. They took all smilingly, just as they had taken from their birth hard work, short

LA VIRGEN DE LA CABEZA

commons, exposure to the weather, and all that Providence had chosen to dispense.

Dinner was served to the travellers by the diligence at a long wooden table covered with a clean, rough cloth. All up and down the board were set great lumps of home-baked bread, small fluted tumblers, and bottles of red wine, giving the whole an air as of Leonardo da Vinci's picture of the "Last Supper." As they consumed potato-soup, the stew of beef and bacon with cabbage and chick peas, the whole made savoury with bits of high-spiced red sausages, one or two dwellers in the little hamlet dropped in to hear the news: the apothecary, the barber, and the priest, a tall and handsome man of fifty, wearing the "*manteo*" with the air that only priests of his nationality ever can assume.

Seated around the ample hearth, tongues were soon loosened and experiences exchanged. No one had ever seen so fierce a storm so late in February, except of course one that they all remembered in their youth, when storms in every quarter of the world must have been almost continuous. Uncle Nicolas, the host, had seldom seen the wolves more plentiful. As he said this the others nodded their heads gravely, being aware, the wind carried off feathers and words before it.

REDEEMED

One man had lost a colt, another a young cow, and Uncle Nicolas himself three or four goats and a fat pig. The goats he did not care about so much ; but the loss of the pig lay near his heart, for it had been cared for like the children of the house, and he had not enjoyed a single sausage, not to speak of bacon or a ham, after all the corn it had consumed. A strong, athletic muleteer, raising himself upon his elbow, after having made a cigarette and spat upon the floor with emphasis, said but a fortnight past upon the road he had encountered three devils straight from hell, as fierce as tigers, all thirsting for his blood. He, with four mules, was on the road from Albuñol to Orgiva. In a deep hollow near a cork wood suddenly they appeared and set on him. "I was alone," he said, "and had my quarterstaff ; but then, you know, no blow a man can strike a wolf ever disables it, except it falls on the foreleg. I had no time to tie my mules, and it was lucky, as it proved, I did not so do. The accursed government has rendered gunpowder so dear that my trabuco was unloaded, although I had it with me on my saddle. Jesus ! What could I do but whirl my quarterstaff about to keep the fiends at bay.

" Yes, I was frightened. Why deny it ?

LA VIRGEN DE LA CABEZA

Miles from a house and with night coming on and not a living thing beside me but the four laden mules. Then in my terror I remembered there was one who, if she willed it, could protect me from the wolves. ‘Nuestra Señora de la Cabeza,’ who has her sanctuary outside Motril, upon La Esplanada, she whom men found upon the beach among the lilies, dark-featured, like ourselves, and most miraculous. So as I fought, the wolves drawing always closer to me, I vowed a candle of the purest wax to her and swore to go barefooted up the hill to pray to her, if she would succour me.

“ She must have heard me, for as I stepped backwards I was surprised to see my mules, who first had seemed about to gallop off, now all were standing still, with their ears pricked forward and pawing with their feet. A miracle, I saw it in a trice, and vowed another candle twice as large as the first that I had offered and swore to make the pilgrimage stripped to my shirt and drawers. Slipping between the animals of God, I patted them, and either because La Morenita had whispered in their ears or from the instinct of self-preservation, they turned their heels round towards the wolves. So well they kicked and lashed at them, whinnying a sharp

hin-hin, as their hoofs struck those enemies of man, that they all fled, limping and howling, leaving me and the mules alone upon the road.

"I owe my safety, after God, first to La Morenita, who from her mansion in the skies puts out her tongue at every other virgin, as well she may, for which of them has lilies that appear each spring in the same place where she was found, even when plucked up by the roots? Then to my mules, who fought for me at peril of their lives. The case is difficult, so I shall only give one candle to Our Lady of the Head, and as for going to her in my shirt and drawers, that would be hardly decent, as she is a lady. As to bare feet, that matters little, for from my childhood I have gone bare-footed and stones and briars harm me as little as if I were a goat and not a Christian. La Morenita never will find out the difference, for in the skies 'tis ten to one that there is not a pair of scales. What do the saints in glory want with so much wax? Surely there must be bees enough in paradise to make them fifty thousand candles, each bigger far than mine."

A laugh went round the other muleteers, that the priest stifled with an uplifted finger.
"Peace, heretic," he said. "Oh, man no

better than a stealer of the sacrament, would you then cheat our Blessed Lady of Motril, who but so recently has saved your life, out of a miserable pound of wax and put your soul in peril ? ”

“ Pardon me, father,” said the muleteer. “ I am a poor man with a large family, and so I thought La Morenita might not have heard of it and that the candle that I promised her might as well go in bread for my own Christianity ; but since it seems that I have sinned, God bless her swarthy face, she shall have a donkey load of wax.”

The moon had risen, and through the chinks of the rough wooden shutters long beams of silver mingled with the glare from the roaring chimney, and all the company sat gazing into the fire, their garments dried, with the agreeable feeling of being safely harboured after storm. Turning towards a girl whose flimsy, brightly coloured clothes, paint, powder and sham jewellery showed that her calling and election had been determined, at least in this world, “ Draw nearer to the fire, my daughter,” said the priest, “ and warm yourself. Storms and misfortunes, nights like this, and the words of our Blessed Lord Himself, remind us that we are all of the same family.” Then going to the door he opened

it, letting the moonlight stream into the room and play on the stone floor.

"The night is clear," he said, "the wind is calmed, and the peaks of the sierras look like loaves of sugar. It may be that our Lady of the Lilies, whose holy name has been to-night bandied about rather irreverently, has been with us unseen and stilled the elements." He stood a moment gazing into the night, his figure sharply silhouetted between the moonlight and the fire. Far away in the recesses of the woods a wolf howled mournfully.

INCH CAILLEACH

THE Island of the Nuns lies like a stranded whale upon the waters of the loch, with its head pointing towards the red rocks of Bal-maha. Tradition tells of a nunnery on the island in times gone by, and certainly it must have been a fitting place to build a convent on. A deep, dark strait cuts it off from the world. No spot in the whole earth could be more fitted for a conventional life of meditation, or for the simple duties performed in simple faith, such as string out a life like beads upon a rosary, till the last prayer is said.

Fell opportunity, that has so often turned saints into sinners, could have had no place upon the rocky islet in the lake. The voices of the sisters singing in the choir must have been scarce distinguishable from the lapping of the wavelets on the beach, or blending with them, made up a harmony, as if nature and men were joining in a pantheistic hymn. Nuns may have lived upon the island with, or without, vocation, have eaten out their hearts

REDEEMED

with longing for their lost world, or, like the Saint of Avila, in mystic ecstasy have striven to be one with the celestial spouse. All this may well have been, but the dim sisterhood has left no record of its passage upon earth, except the name Inch Cailleach, beautiful in its liquid likeness to the sound of the murmuring waves, and the wind sighing in the brackens and the bents.

Ben Lomond towers above the wooded island, with its outcrop of grey rocks, and in the distance Ben Vorlich, Meall nan Caora and Bein Chabhair seem to protect it from all modern influence by their grim aspect and aloofness, for even their rare smiles when the sun hunts the shadows across their rocky faces, still are stern. If the lone, wooded inchlet once sheltered nuns, or if the name was merely given it to commemorate some ancient Highland Cailleach, who had retired there to gaze into the mists upon the hills, or dream of Fingal and Cuchullin as she sat nodding over a fire of peat, certain it is that nature must have put forth her best creative power to form so fitting a last resting-place for the wild clan, whose bones are laid beneath the mossy turf round the great sculptured stones.

Right on the top of a long shoulder of the

INCH CAILLEACH

island, within the ruined walls of the old chapel whose broken pillars, moss-grown finials and grooved door-jambs lie in a growth of bilberries among the invading copse, the Gregarach for centuries have interred their dead. They and the wild McFarlanes—was not the moon known as McFarlanes' Bowat?—rest from their labour at the sword. Quietly they lie, they who knew never a quiet hour in life. Equal in death and equal in misfortune when they lived, had they consulted all the heralds and their pursuivants they could not have hit upon a device more fitting than the cross-handled sword that is cut roughly on so many of their tombs. Bitterly they paid for the slaughter of Glenfruin, with two hundred years of outlawry, and with the hand of every man against them. Well did they deserve the title of the Clan Na Cheo, for the mist rolling through the corries was their best hiding-place, the natural smoke-screen that protected all the Clan Gregor from their enemies. On the leafy Island in the great lake alone they found a resting-place, and though the long grey stones by which they swore are few in number, the grassy hillocks that dot the burial-ground encircled by the ruined walls are numberless. Nowhere could men have found a spot so fitting for a long

REDEEMED

sleep after their foray in the world. The soothng wind among the thickets of scrub-oak, of hazel and of birch, the fresh, damp scent of the sweet-gale and staghorn moss, the belling of the roe at evening, the strange, sweet wildness of the steep, isolated island with its two headlands and its little plain, now buried deep in wood, must lull the resting children of the mist.

A steep and winding path leads from the pebbly beach, and crosses and recrosses a little rill, brown but transparent, as it wends its way towards the lake in miniature cascades and tiny linns, in which play minnows. It makes a tinkling music for the sleepers among the ruins of what was once Inch Cailleach parish church. It passes now and then a fir, whose bright red trunk stands out afame among the copse, and bears the cones from which Clan Alpine took its badge. Here and there clumps of scarlet dockens mark the way, like stations of the Cross upon a Calvary. Hardly a footstep has beaten down the grass, for up above, in the lone circle of grey stones, lie men whose names were written in characters as evanescent as the smoke-scrolls an aeroplane traces upon the sky. Clearly imprinted on the peaty soil, roe tracks call up the memory of men who passed the best part of their lives

INCH CAILLEACH

in following the deer. The silence of the woods is only broken by the flight of some great capercailzie, as its wings beat against the leaves when it first launches into flight, or by the cushats cooing, deep and full-throated as the bell-bird's call in the Brazilian wilds.

The loneliness, the sense of isolation, although the world is just at hand, and tourist-laden steamers ply upon the loch, passing but a few hundred yards away and breaking up the picture of the wooded island reflected in the lake, as in a mirage, with their paddles, are as absolute as if the islet was situated in the outer Hebrides.

The very scent of the lush grass, set about thickly with the yellow tormentils, with scabious and bog-asphodel, strikes on the nostrils as from an older world, in which the reek of petrol and the noise of factories were unknown. Many a procession of ragged warriors, in the past, their deerskin buskins making scarce a sound upon the stones, must have toiled up the winding path to lay their dead within the little burial-ground, and then, the ceremony over, stepped noiselessly away into the sheltering mist. The nuns, McGregors, and McFarlanes all have passed away, and are as if they never had been, yet

R E D E E M E D

they have left an aura that still pervades the leafy isle. Nothing is left of them but the vaguest memory, and yet they seem to live in every thicket, every copse, and as the burn runs brattling to the lake it sings their threnody. When all is hushed at night and owls fly noiselessly, their flight hardly disturbing the still air, and the rare nocturnal animals that all-destroying progress (or what you call the thing) has left alive, surely the spirits of the nameless sleepers under the mossy turf rise like a vapour from their graves, commune with Cuchullin and with Fingal, pat Bran's rough head, and fight old battles once again ; until at the first streak of dawn they glide back to their places, under the sculptured stones.

Let them sleep on. They have had their foray, they have chased the roe and followed the red deer. The very mists upon the mountains are far more tangible than they are now. Let them rest within the ruined walls of the dismantled chapel buried in the copse, that has shown itself more durable than the stone walls that lie about its roots. Bracken and heather, bog-myrtle, blaeberry and moss exhale their odours, sweeter than incense, over the graves where sleep the nameless men. The waves still murmur on the beach, the

INCH CAILLEACH

tiny burnlet whispers its coronach. Under their rude tombstones men whose feet, shod in their deerskin brogues, were once as light as fawns, are waiting till the shrill skirl of the Piob Mor shall call them to the great gathering of the clans.

EL ALCALDE DE MÓSTOLES

IN the year 1808 Napoleon was at the height of his renown. All Europe lay beneath his feet. England and Russia alone were still unconquered ; but in due course he hoped to deal with them. Austria, Prussia, Holland, and Italy were provinces of France. Spain, that had for centuries been inaccessible to conquerors, was beaten to her knees. King Joseph, known to the Spaniards by the name of Pepe Botellas, held his court in Madrid, surrounded by a few sycophants and renegades. All patriotism seemed dead. Murat and his Mamelukes kept down the city with an iron hand. Goya was taking notes of everything, crystallising the odious tyranny of the French, in his immortal " Horrors of War,"—horrors that have never been surpassed, either in reality or paint.

The country, delivered over to the mercies of the invading troops, was seething with revolt, but wanted someone to stand out and lead. Only the partisan El Empecinado was

EL ALCALDE DE MÓSTOLES

in arms in Navarre and the Basque provinces. For all that, no Frenchman's life was worth ten minutes' purchase outside cantonments or the camp. The country people cut their throats like sheep with their long knives, and often threw their bodies into their wine-vats to get rid of them. In after-days, to say a wine had a French twang was long a jest among the peasantry. Still they went on, stabbing their horses in the churches, violating nuns and stealing priceless ornaments from the cathedrals and the monasteries. Spain stirred convulsively under the heel of the detested Gabacho, as the people liked to call the French. That which was to prove her strength, and had done so in ages past, was now her weakness, for the intensely local patriotism had formed each town and village into a community apart, slow to combine with one another. "Mi tierra" meant for them, not Spain, but every separate village and a few miles around.

At last the turbulent populace of Madrid, irritated past bearing by the Mamelukes who represented to them not the French only, but their hereditary enemies, the Moors, rose in revolt. Armed with their knives alone, they fell upon the Mamelukes in a narrow street, stabbing their horses and butchering the riders

REDEEMED

when they fell. Two heroic officers of artillery, Velarde and Daoiz, opened fire with a piece of cannon on the French. Their heroism was wasted—that is, if sacrifice is ever wasted—and the revolt was crushed that very afternoon, in what Murat referred to as a “bath of blood.” The two young officers were shot, and by their death secured their immortality in Spain. Madrid was stunned, but the news soon was carried to the neighbouring little towns, by men escaping from the massacre.

Out on the Castilian steppes, fifteen or sixteen miles from Madrid, there lies a little town called Móstoles. It lies, almost as one might say, *à fleur d'eau* on the great brown plain. The high-road to Portugal passes down its long main street. Even to-day it has but thirteen hundred citizens. In summer the houses, built of sun-dried bricks covered with plaster, are calcined by the sun. The winter winds, sweeping down from La Sierra de Guadarrama, scourge it pitilessly. For nine months of the year dust covers everything, falling on man and beast, on the few moribund acacias in the plaza, turning all to the colour of a rabbit's back. During the other three it is a slough of mud that wheel-borne traffic and the long strings of donkeys and

EL ALCALDE DE MÓSTOLES

mules struggle through painfully. Far off the Sierra of Guadalupe and the Gredos are just visible as faint blue lines hardly to be picked out from the clouds, except in certain states of atmosphere. In the short, fierce summer the mirage spreads illusory pools over the surface of the plain, and in the winter mornings, after a sharp frost, the woods along the foothills of the Guadarrama hang upside down upon the sky. Along the road are dotted many other little dusty towns, all with their little plaza, great church, large enough for larger congregations than they ever hold, their apothecaries with leeches in a glass jar at the door, and fly-blown patent medicines in the window, and barber's shop, that serves as news exchange.

Upon the second of May of the year 1808 news filtered through to Móstoles that there had been a massacre in the capital. The seventeen kilometres of high road could easily be covered on a good horse within two hours, and it is not to be supposed the rider spared the spur.

As it was written, one Andres Torrejon happened to be Alcalde of the place. An honest countryman of six-and-sixty years of age, in all his life he had never had occasion to show what he was worth. What he

REDEEMED

was like to the outward visible eye is but a matter of conjecture. Most probably a square-built, round-faced Castilian farmer, his cheeks stubbly with a week's growth of beard—the village barber shore but on a Sunday morning—sparing of speech, yet full of sayings fitted to every accident of life. His dress, that has but little varied, even to-day, knee-breeches of dark cloth, his jacket short, showing a double-breasted flowered waistcoat of a sprigged pattern, his linen dazzlingly white, a black silk handkerchief bound like a turban round his head, the whole surmounted by a hard-brimmed, black felt hat, kept in place underneath his chin by a broad band of silk. His interior grace, his honesty, tenacity of purpose, and his enthusiasm, slow to be excited, but when once moved as irresistible as a landslide after rain, he has left stamped upon Castile. It will endure as long as her vast plains wave green with corn in spring, turn leather-coloured under the fierce sun of summer, and in the winter when the keen frosts burn up all vegetation, stretch out desolate, with but the withered stalks of thistles standing up ghost-like in the waste.

The nerves of all true patriots were on edge. Never since the days of the Saracens had the

EL ALCALDE DE MÓSTOLES

invader's foot trodden Castilian soil. The news of the last outrage brought all the people out into the plaza before the parish church of the Ascension, a mosque, tradition says, in the days Spanish peasants always refer to as "the time of the Moors." All over Spain the people's nerves were twitching, but yet the heavy hand of Murat had deprived them of all spirit of revolt.

It happened, luckily for Andres Torrejon, that the Ex-Secretary of the Admiralty under Charles IV, Juan Perez Vilamil, was living in the town, having refused to recognise King Joseph and his usurping court. Long did the Alcalde and Vilamil talk over what was the best course to pursue. Then, after praying in the church, the Alcalde called a meeting of his rustic senators. The people thronged outside the council-room, the very room in which to-day is set into the wall the tablet that commemorates what was resolved on that eventful afternoon in May. The peasant councillors sat round the council board, with their Alcalde in the chair. Perez and Gomez, Camacho, Lopez and Galvan, all peasants, their hands furrowed with toil and weather, their shoulders rounded with the plough, their faces tanned to a deep brown by the hard climate of Castile, and

REDEEMED

their eyes twinkling deeply in their sockets, like the eyes of mariners, of Arabs, and of all those who pass their lives upon illimitable plains, scorched by the wind and sun, all waited for what "Uncle Andrew" had to say.

Rising with due deliberation from his seat, after having taken off his hat and placed it carefully beside him on the table, the Alcalde told of what had happened in Madrid. His actual words are not recorded, only the substance of his speech. As he spoke of the massacre, the shooting down of women and of children in the streets, the execution of the prisoners drawn up opposite a wall, and of the people who had died trampled beneath the horses of the Mameluke infidel, his hearers' hands stole to their sashes, and muttering "Death to the Gabacho," they spat upon the floor. Sitting impassively like figures carved in walnut-wood, the peasant council suffered under Napoleon's heel. Now and again one of them would assent in a half grunt, and anyone who did not know them might have thought they were unmoved. As they sat with their heads a little sideways, their mouths half open, and their breath coming in short gusts that heaved their chests under their heavy rustic clothes, just as a barge

heaves on a canal after a steamer passes, they seemed like animals about to spring upon their prey. The Alcalde recapitulated all their country's wrongs. The cuckold Charles IV a prisoner in France, the queen, a harlot left under the dominion of her lover of the day, the troops unpaid and led by officers who did not know their duty, and worst of all the miserable French puppet king, lording it on the throne of Charles V. "Spain wants a leader, someone to show the way, to gather up the scattered bands of guerrilleros and above all a straight and downright declaration that the country is at war. No one has yet stepped out to lead us, although they slaughter us like flies, scorn us and spit on us ; on us Castilians, whose forefathers furnished the famous Spanish infantry that swept through France and Italy like fire. Who would think we were the heirs of those who fought at San Quentin ? "

The people of the town pressed round the iron-grated windows of the council-chamber, silent, but gazing on their rustic councillors, strung up with fury, cursing their impotence. At last the speaker, tightening up his sash, wiping the foam and moisture from his lips, took a long breath, and after looking round to Vilamil, who nodded at him, said, " Friends

and neighbours, I have served you faithfully for years. The time has come that I must now serve Spain. Therefore I, Andres Torrejon, duly elected the Alcalde of this town of Móstoles, do declare war against the French."

For a brief moment there was silence, silence so absolute that the breath of the people peering through the gratings of the windows sounded as loudly as when a horse upon a frosty morning pants up an incline. Then, rising to their feet, the conscript peasants surrounded the Alcalde, grasping him by the hand, and shouting, "War, war to the knife ; death to the assassins of Madrid." The people in the little plaza caught up the cry of " War, war to the knife. Uncle Andrés has declared war upon the French ! "

In the closing darkness of that night of May Andres Torrejon sat down and penned his memorable pronouncement, the first and last that he was fated to indite, but one that made his name immortal throughout the Spanish-speaking world. "Our country is in peril, Madrid is perishing, the victim of the perfidy of the French. Spaniards, hasten to save her. May 2nd, 1808. 'El Alcalde de Móstoles.' Nothing could have been more simple and direct, with just the touch of the

EL ALCALDE DE MÓSTOLES

ridiculous that gives sublimity. His next act was to send the son of his old colleague on the council, Simon Hernandez, on a good horse to take his proclamation to the Alcaldes of the neighbouring towns. At once he mounted, and first reaching Navalcarnero, left the fiery cross. Alcorcón, Navalmorál, and Escalona all received the message, and all of them at once declared war on the French. The messenger crossed the Alberche and pushed on westwards, riding without a stop across the plains all through that fateful night in May. In two days' riding he reached Badajoz, his horse still fresh, after having covered nearly two hundred miles. The city rose at once, and sent on word to Cáceres. Cáceres passed on the signal and by the end of May all Spain had risen, not like an ordinary country rises in such circumstances, but town by town, village by village, each declared war upon the French.

The rest is history, the coming of the great "Lor Vilanton" as he was called in the Spain of those days, with the English troops, and the long war of the Peninsula. The hour had struck, and from that moment Napoleon's star began to pale, Moscow completed that which Móstoles began, and when the French recrossed the swift Borysthenes, slaughtered

REDEEMED

like sheep by the pursuing Cossacks, their ruin (after God) they owed to the Alcalde of the little town, sun-dried and wind-scorched, in the Castilian plains.

EL LEBECHE

A DENSE sea fog covered the hills as with a shroud. The ruined Moorish castle that dominates the town, frowned through the mist upon the Christian city as if it still resented its subjection to the Cross. Great drops of moisture fell from the palm-trees. The fields of sugar-cane formed one coagulated mass, their leaves matted together with the damp. The red hibiscus and geraniums mocked the weather, their scarlet blossoms shining like lights upon a fairway that led to some uncharted port. The highway running through a line of villas was a sea of mud. The passing motor-cars raised showers of dirty water that fell upon the rare foot-passengers, just as the wrath from heaven falls on the righteous and the unrighteous, with divine impartiality.

The mountain streams that traverse the great suburb, La Caleta, had become raging torrents, bearing upon their flood dead cats, old orange frails, fragments of earthenware, and all the flotsam and jetsam of a southern town.

Lines of dejected donkeys and of mules,

all dripping wet, pursued their homeward Calvary along the road between the double line of tramway rails. Behind them, on an apocalyptic horse or thin white mule, perched sideways on the "aparejo," huddled in a threadbare blanket with heels drumming ceaselessly against their flanks, their drivers faced the clinging mist, scarcely less miserable than their four-footed fellows that they urged along. The sea boomed like the echo of great guns discharged centuries ago, whose sound had been arrested in some uncongenial atmosphere, and had been liberated by the fog. In a recess between the gutter and the great retaining wall of some rich Indiano's villa lay a tired donkey with its head propped up on a stone. Dripping with moisture that, mingling with dried sweat, formed ropy lines upon its shrunken flanks, its pack-saddle still upon its back, it lay waiting the coming of A Son of Man to it and to its kind, who should ride into the Jerusalem of all the animals. Orange and lemon trees, dripping and draggled-looking in the unfamiliar gloom, gave an air as of the garden of the Hesperides slowly submerging when Atlantis sank into the sea.

The people's flimsy clothes, the unsubstantial villas, built for fine weather with their

EL LEBECHE

ample porticoes, their flights of marble steps, and fountains still playing futilely against the mist, added, by their unfitness with their surroundings, to the discomfort that had descended on the bright southern land. Tramways emerged from the misty atmosphere, as unexpectedly as ships loom up, menacing and imminent, in a fog at sea. Their jingling bells seemed muffled, and when their passengers descended they slipped off unperceived and were swallowed up as noiselessly as a stone dropped into the snow. It was the sort of day that makes one think the creator of the world may, after all, have been some sort of Bolshevik, or else had worked during a fit of indigestion that he was anxious to pass on to all his puppets with their immortal souls.

The tourists in the great hotel, well warmed and sheltered, raised a perpetual litany against the weather, the country, Providence, and their hard lot in having left their homes to find themselves faced with the same conditions they had left behind. Outside, exposed to cold and wet, dripping and miserably clad, the passers-by on the high-road uttered no word of protest, enduring everything, hunger (the national disease), the want of shelter and the long miles they had to tramp before they

reached their miserable homes, with all the Oriental patience of the race. Now and then on the oily waters of the swelling sea a fishing-boat's sharp-pointed lateen pierced through the mist, and then sank out of sight, just as the back fin of a shark emerges from the water, and as quickly disappears.

Interminable lines of donkeys and of mules passed by as in a nightmare. The high-wheeled mat-covered carts, drawn by a string of horses, piloted always by a little donkey, followed by a dejected dog, creaked on, swaying and surging to one side and the other, their driver's head just visible as he lay stretched out at full length to shelter from the rain. Trees, houses, the hills, and all the features of the landscape had disappeared, and nature seemed to suffer through the excess of her fecundity. When all the pack mules and the carts had passed and disappeared into the mist, a herd of milch-goats plodded along, their dangling udders almost trailing in the mud, towards their pasturage.

Behind them stalked the goatherd, wrapped in his tattered blanket, with a broad-brimmed hat upon his head. Tall, sallow, weather-beaten and athletic, he walked cheerfully along, cracking his sling at intervals and carrying a kid whose head peeped out beneath

EL LEBECHE

his arm. He crooned a fitful Arab-sounding song with a strange interval, and now and then broke off to munch a piece of bread, his face wreathed in an almost religious smile, for bread is something sacred to people of his class in the land of Maria Santisima.

The mist, the cold, the wind, all were as nothing to him, for he had bread, and appetite with bread is not vouchsafed to men for nothing in this vale of tears.

Then he, too, and his goats passed on and vanished, but from the recesses of the gloom there floated back snatches of his harsh song, quavering and wild as the cry of a curlew on a Scottish moor.

DAR-EL-JINOUN

THE sandy Sáhel stretched out for a mile or two along the shore of a sea, never at rest under the east wind that tormented it, fretting its surface with white tide-rips, that from the beach looked like a flock of gulls. The little Arab town upon its hill, dazzlingly white, but for its slender mosque tower covered with green tiles, its flat-topped houses rising tier on tier, framed in the picture to the west. A jutting cape clothed with a scrubby growth of kermes oak, palmetto and lentiscus, crowned with a mouldering watch-tower, cut off the Sáhel from the outside world, upon the east.

Wild mountains rose jagged and serrated to the south, and the low sandy plains, where Spain was lost under Don Roderick, shut it in to the north. A grove of fig-trees, planted in a circle, rose like an oasis in the thorny vegetation that fringed the sandy grass which ran a quarter of a mile or so in depth, between the foothills and the sea. In the oasis of the fig grove during the noonday heat the Arab herd-boys, watching their goats, their scraggy cows, or their lean colts, that still retained, in spite of hunger and in-breeding, something of

DAR-EL-JINOUN

the grace their ancestors had brought from the Hejáz, or Nejd, played upon flutes cut from a cane, or plaited strings out of the fibre of the dwarfish palms. Their plaintive little tunes, quavering and fitful as the singing of a fledgling bird, appealed rather to the soul than to the outward ear. Only Theocritus could have done justice to the scene, when underneath the trees the goats lay dozing, and the colts stood resting a hind-leg and swishing their long tails half drowsily, while the boys breathed into their rustic flutes.

Upon a rocky hill that rose out of the waste of gnarled, goat-eaten brushwood still stood the ruins of a castle built by the Portuguese, "in the epoch of their glory." Time had done little to deface it ; but the Arabs, always prone to take their goods where they find them, had used it for a quarry. Below it, a few feet above the beach, a deserted battery still held guns, marked with the name of George III, but prone upon the ground, their carriages long ago used to light the shepherds' fires. The cracked cement held tufts of wild flowers, and lizards peered out shyly through the interstices. Beneath the castle lay a Moorish cemetery to mark the resting-place of the Mujehadin who had died in battle fighting against the infidel. Its

rough, unsculptured stones, that looked as if they had been taken from a Scottish drystone dyke, marked where the dead were sleeping, and warned the horseman who crossed the burial-ground at speed, his grave was open for him. Three caroub-trees, secular, but green and vigorous, overhung a well. The only trees upon the plain, they had resisted all the fury of the perpetual east wind, that dwarfed and stunted all the other vegetation in its blast. A sluggish little river formed a bar in miniature where it flowed into the sea, at one end of the plain. Salt-pans were dug beside its banks, the heaps of salt piled up beside them, dazzlingly white and scintillating in the sun. The walls of Tingis, a city old when London was a wattled village, were strewed about in piles ; but the great docks for galleys built by the Romans, when they had crossed the straits into North Africa, still stood intact, though silted up with sand.

Over the whole little plain brooded an air as of an older world, an Arcadia, tempered with an occasional tribal fight or cattle raid, to show that the shepherds were still Arabs, holding as an article of faith that the sword writes plainer than the pen. Still, though the ships of every nationality sailed through the straits all day, only a few miles distant

DAR-EL-JINOUN

from the coast, the people passed their lives unchanged since Abraham's servant saw Rebekah, with her jar poised upon her shoulder, waiting at the well. Long lines of white-clad figures passed noiselessly along the beach at dawn upon their way to market in the town. They passed so noiselessly, carrying their slippers in their hands, for leather costs more than the skin upon the feet, that when they vanished in the distance only their footsteps in the wet sand showed their reality. All day the long procession from the hills of Angera wended its way toward the town. Men drove their mules and asses, laden with country produce and with firewood, and women staggered, bent double underneath great loads of straw or broom to heat the ovens in the town.

Two tidal rivers barred their way. If they were deep as the tide was making, a man headed the caravan and sounded with a cane. The rushing water piled up on the weather quarters of the mules, and donkeys struggled through with men holding them up against the stream. The women bravely ventured in, with their clothes tucked up underneath their chins, but saved their modesty by covering their mouths. At even-tide the people all returned looking more

phantom-like and unsubstantial even than at dawn. The younger men danced on the sands like fauns, and boys threw their curved clubs at rabbits that had come out to graze upon the grass.

When night had once descended and when Sohail, Algol, Altair and all the stars the Arabs named in far Chaldea centuries ago shed their soft beams upon the world, a peace, not passing human understanding, fell upon the plain. The murmur of the surf on the white beach, the quiet of the district with its air of having been untouched since first the Arabs straggled over it upon their way to the Castle of the Crossing when they invaded Spain a thousand years ago, seemed designed to protect it virgin and inviolate, to all eternity. Yet it was destined (who shall divine what Allah has in store even for his faithful ?) to see a palace rise beside the well and its three caroub-trees. Slowly it rose, not in a night like Jonah's gourd but despite the efforts, laudable enough perhaps taken from the point of view of race preservation, of Spanish workmen to do as little as they could in as much time as possible, the frequent floods that cut off all connection with the town, and cattle raids that made the roads unsafe to travel for days together. The hedge of aloes planted

on a mound, with a deep ditch to seaward, cut off a portion of the plain planted with trees that looked at first destined to shrivel in the fierce east wind that hitherto had triumphed over all vegetation but the lentiscus scrub.

Courtyard succeeded courtyard, and by degrees the house itself took shape, to the astonishment of the Arabs, who said it was a veritable palace of the *Arabian Nights*. Built in the Moorish style, with battlemented walls so dazzlingly white, that the eye at noontide could as little gaze on them as on the sun itself, the name just suited it. A loggia with low arches faced the well and the three caroub-trees. So close they grew to the arcaded loggia that they seemed with their leafy canopy part and parcel of the house. Workmen from Fez had decorated several rooms with the same pious sentences and stalactites their ancestors had left in the Alhambra, and when the lights were lighted they shone through the pierced stucco work, setting the room aglow. When all was finished, the Oriental carpets on the floors, the silver-mounted guns and yataghans, and all the flotsam and the jetsam that Oriental life holds out with both hands to those with taste and money who pass their lives one foot in Europe the other in the East, completed the astonish-

ment of the Moors who visited it. After its first fight with the prevailing wind and when the hedge of cypresses got up, the garden that had arisen out of the bare plain, as if by magic, was a paradise. Palms and gravilleas, camphor and Judas-trees, with all the flowering shrubs of every climate, shot up in a few years, and people who remembered the low wind-swept plain, to their amazement walked in a shady wood, when they revisited the place. The wind no longer howled, but rustled softly overhead, among the trees. An air of calm and of repose hung over everything, and by the pools in which the goldfish sailed about, sheltered from the sun by the pink water-lilies, Moors used to come and sit with the same sense of great content that the sound of a plashing fountain in the sun induces in their race. The house became a meeting place for all the flower and cream of the strange little town, at that time a miniature Constantinople, with its ambassadors and ministers from every nation upon earth, all with portfolios and no duties to fulfil.

Ladies in European fashions, looking strangely out of place in the surroundings, sat in the Moorish rooms on cushions, their high-heeled shoes refusing to adapt themselves either to the picture or the position as

they sat. They strayed about the gardens, asking the names of the exotic plants and straight forgetting them. Some thought it would be quite amusing to live in such surroundings, others deplored the fate of the poor Moorish women, immured for life within four walls. Both attitudes of mind were probably as far removed from what the fair philosophers imagined as was possible. Adjectives that must have exhausted their scant vocabularies, as charming, sweet, delicious, lovely, scented the atmosphere with a kind of mental patchouli. One might have thought oneself in a celestial pastrycook's.

Horses were always neighing at the gates. Occasionally they broke loose and fought with one another, rearing and screaming as they pawed the air. Mules dozed patiently under their high red saddles, the boys who held them generally sleeping peacefully seated on the sand. Nor were there wanting incidents to show that Oriental life was as near at hand as that of Europe, with its sauntering ladies and paste-board ministers of Albania, Andorra, San Marino, and the other little States, once dear to Offenbach. Raisuli as a young unknown man with but five followers once passed the night, sleeping below the caroub-trees around the well, happy to feast upon a

sheep procured for him at the nearest aduar. Years afterwards the master of the house, after a long captivity at the hands of the same man whom he had welcomed and who had slept beneath his trees, was liberated under the cover of the night in the grove of fig-trees on the plain.

The villages of Sinia and Menár had many a tribal fight, and while they fought, inside the house ladies and gentlemen took tea, admired the curiosities, and went into the garden to see if some rare plant or other was in flower. Thus house and garden rose out of the sand, flourished and appeared destined to endure. It was written otherwise, either because Allah was jealous of the little paradise, or because nothing is destined to endure. To-day, fallen from its high estate, dreary and bat-haunted, the paint hanging in flakes from the once dazzling walls, the house lies desolate. Across the loggia, the bougainvillea, once the glory of the porch, a splash of purple on the white-washed walls, looking like a stain of wine on a white tablecloth, lies prone and draggled in the dust. The fishponds are all dry, the goldfish dead, the little rills of water burst and leaking on the paths. The fountain is half full of empty sardine tins and broken glass. The fruit-trees stand neglected and unpruned.

D A R - E L - J I N O U N

Only the palms, their heads in fire, their feet in water, flourish and raise their feathery branches, reminding one of a deserted lighthouse still keeping watch over a ruined port. Grass grows in the courtyards once so full of life, and a green shutter in the house bangs to and fro in the east wind, sounding in the deserted garden like a signal-gun booming through a fog. Wild boars root in the beds once tended carefully and stocked with flowers. Even at noontide the place is melancholy. In the long nights when rabbits play about upon the grass and porcupines pace through the shrubberies, it must be a veritable Dar-el-Jinoun, for only djinns could thrive in such a house.

P R O M O T E D

AT the sound of the boatswain's whistle, the galley-slaves lay on their oars. Turks, Moors, and Christian criminals, they formed a curious amalgam of the rascality of Southern Europe and Northern Africa. Stripped to the waist, with their heads shaven closely to the skin, they sat six deep, chained to the bench on which they tugged the ponderous oars. A gangway, raised above the towers, ran the whole distance of the rowing benches, and on it stood the boatswain with a heavy whip that he used unmercifully. If one of the slaves died at the oar, he was at once heaved overboard and the five left had to perform the same work as before, with a man short. In storms, or actions, or a chase after some other vessel, the boatswain ran to and fro, putting bread steeped in wine into their mouths.

When the way that the galley had on her had ceased, she let her anchor go and floated like a nautilus on the quiet waters of the little harbour of Motril, a cable's length from shore.

Her pennant, trailing in the water and the

P R O M O T E D

great ensign at the jackstaff on the poop, showed her to be one of the Dorias galleys from Genoa. On board her, under the command of Captain Don Julian Ramirez, straight from the Flemish wars, came a detachment of one of the famous "tercios," to fight against the Moriscoes, whom persecution had driven to revolt. All the hill villages of the Alpujarras around Granada were held for the new sultan who, once a Christian under the name of Fernando de Valor, had gone back to the simpler faith of Allah and his prophet and butchered every Spaniard he could find. Don John of Austria himself was in command against them. Boats left the galley, full of men, their horses swimming after them, led by a rope. They formed upon the beach and let their horses roll in the sand before they saddled up. Then, when the last boatload had got ashore, the detachment of some fifty men slowly set out towards Motril leading their horses, who were stiff and cramped after ten days at sea from Genoa. Their captain led his own horse as he walked at the head of his company.

They crossed the beach close to the spot where, in a bed of lilies, was found the sculptured image of Our Lady of the Head, revered throughout the district for many a

miracle it has wrought, although the unbelievers shoot out their lips and say, it once adorned the prow of some wrecked ship. When they arrived at the old town the wild inhabitants swarmed out to welcome them, the children, swarthy and ragged as the Moors, shrill-voiced and critical, and in no wise awed by the grim warriors, upon whom they freely passed remarks not always complimentary. As they marched slowly through the sandy streets, towards the plaza where they were to camp, the population crowded to their doors, and, from the iron-grated windows, peered women dressed in the formal costume of the time, but much behind the fashion of Madrid. Though nothing in the world was so detested in their eyes as a Moor, still the close intercourse between the ever-jarring races had endued them with so much of the Arab character that many of them drew their shawls across their mouths when the troopers stared too closely at them.

All eyes were fixed upon the captain, who, thin and war-scarred, one hand upon the hilt of his long Milan rapier, gravely saluted the Alcalde as he gave his horse to a man to hold, who stepped out from the ranks. The men in their trunk hose, buff jerkins, tall russet boots and bright steel bassinets, were low in

P R O M O T E D

stature as a rule, but active and well knit, swarthy and with the look about them that only life exposed to constant danger ever gives. Some carried crossbows of steel fitted with little windlasses, for no living man was strong enough to bend them with the naked hand. Others bore harquebuses that still were fired with the pyrites wheel, for flintlocks were but just coming into use. All carried pikes and swords of the same pattern as their captain's, though of a common make, heavy, but serviceable. Broken to war for years in Holland, the soldiers, who had been accustomed to give or take but little quarter in their campaigns against the northern heretics, were just the kind of men to deal with their hereditary foes, the Moors. The people of Motril poured into their willing ears tales of the cruelties committed by the revolted Moriscoes on the Christian villagers, that set their blood on fire. Their captain scarcely could prevail on them to rest, before the horses were fit to take the road.

On the third morning, after a mass held in their camp and an unneeded exhortation not to spare the Moorish dogs, they filed out of Motril. Their chaplain, Fray Juan de Dios, a tall, pale-faced Franciscan friar, strong and athletic, with his habit tucked up in his belt,

marched with the crossbowmen on foot, carrying a crucifix. Captain Ramirez and his lieutenant, Hugo Mondragon, said that the friar was wasted, and that so fine and tall a man ought to have been a soldier. They often asked him, half in earnest, half jestingly, to change his habit for a uniform, promising if he did so to promote him to the rank of "alferez" at the first opportunity. To all these jokes, the friar used to reply that he could do better service in his own regiment and that the Lord would not forget to promote him, if he should see fit.

At daybreak Captain Ramirez left the town, the ragged population turning out to see him on the road, and then returning to its usual avocation of consuming time, as time was what it had the most of to consume. A fresh, soft breeze blew off the sea, wafting a light mist towards the ochre-coloured hills, around whose tops it hung in wreaths, but without shrouding them from sight as in the north. The company crossed the half-dried-up river, that only ran in channels here and there, the horses whinnied, glad to be freed from the confinement of the ship and danced and passaged sideways when the water splashed against their legs. Gradually Motril sank out of sight, as they wound through the sugar-

P R O M O T E D

fields that circle round the town. When the church-tower had disappeared and all the miserable reed-built, straw-thatched huts were passed, Captain Ramirez threw out skirmishers on each side of the troop and sent two mounted men in front. Each crag and copse upon the way might hold an enemy and all the farms upon the road were quite deserted, the cattle driven to the shelter of the walls of Adra, Salobreña, or Motril and the crops left standing in the fields. As they ascended the rude track towards the Alpujarras, bearing towards the east a little, they passed by Albuñol, its white and Moorish-looking houses refracting back the morning sun so as almost to blind the soldiers, long accustomed to the low skies of the Low Countries. The soldiers muttered to each other, "Spain once more; praise to the Lord, she never changes, and though bread, meat and all the rest may lack, we have the sun to warm us. Long live the Sun!" When the track passed Polopos, they entered the great cork woods of the lower foothills of the sierras, and looking to the vast expanse of country descried Almuñecar in the distance and Salobreña on its rocky eminence. Torrox, still held by the enemies of God, nestled against the very breast of the wild hills, encircled by its walls. Its slender mosque

tower was just visible, and near the walls the tents of the besiegers, sent by Don John of Austria to reduce the place, clustered like toadstools round the trunk of a dead tree.

Now and again they passed dead bodies half eaten by the wolves, and halted for Fray Juan to say a prayer over them, while the men cursed the spawn of Mahomet. Lanjarron lay half in ruins, and from the cellars crept starved wretches who had been too terrified to venture out to make their way towards the coast. From them the captain learned that the first strong place held by the rebels was but a half-day's march away among the hills. The people said it was impregnable without siege cannon, perched as it was, like an eagle's eyrie on a crag, with a deep chasm in the rock before the only gate. Night was approaching, and in an orange garden where half the trees had been cut down they made their camp. So wild and desolate the landscape looked in the fast failing light, it seemed they and their horses were the only living things in all the world. Far off, the sea shone like a sheet of frosted silver, without a sail to give relief to its immensity. The red earth glowed like a blazing furnace under the last rays of the setting sun. Great bands of scarlet, fading into magenta and dissolving into a faint purple,

P R O M O T E D

barred the sky. Lakes seemed to float above the mountain-tops as in a mirage ; lakes so translucent and diaphanous that, as they melted into faintest saffron and disappeared to form again in fine gradations of violet, black, brown, aquamarine, and palest opal, it seemed as if the atmosphere challenged the spectrum to follow all its shades.

The sentinels drowsed at their posts, blowing their match occasionally to keep it burning. When it flared for an instant, its bluish gleam lit up the bivouac and disclosed the groups of soldiers, sleeping with their feet towards the fire, and underneath the orange-trees, the horses picketed, munching their barley, or resting a hind-leg, with one ear pointing forward and the other backward, to catch the slightest sound. Of all the camp, only the friar was wakeful, telling his beads, and rising now and then to pray upon his knees. The officers, who slept but intermittently, smiled at each other as they looked at him, and muttered, "Not only he, but all the friars in Spain are praying for us." The false dawn saw the camp astir, with the dew dropping off the orange-trees, matting the horses' manes and tails and running from the barrels of the harquebuses. Before the morning star had fairly disappeared, the men had

R E D E E M E D

cleaned their arms, looked to the crossbow strings, fed their horses and after a brief prayer from the friar, commenced a long ascent over a steep staircase of rock, the horses scrambling like cats to keep their foothold, and striking fire out of the stones. Soon peasants driving their flocks before them appeared upon the road, with tales of all the horrors of the revolt, for both sides fought like famished wolves, holding their lives as nothing, if they might only kill an enemy. On every side the smoke of burning villages filled the air, and in the distance shots resounded through the hills.

Spurring along the road and looking anxiously from side to side among the bushes, a courier from Don John of Austria's headquarters at Isnalloz rode up to them. Victory was certain, but several rebel chieftains still held out and the campaign was bound to last for months. A Turk, one Mamet Ali, held the strong little fortress of Hisnr-el-Birk, only a league away, with about five-and-twenty men. From it he sallied out at intervals to raid the district, slaughtering the villagers like sheep, and violating all the women and girls. The courier did not know the Spanish name of the stronghold, but said it did not matter, for hereabouts we all speak Arabic. He tightened up his girths, crossed himself,

P R O M O T E D

mounted and moved off, calling out as he went, "Mamet Ali is a devil and the son of a devil; look out for him." Then, spurring on, he vanished in a cloud of dust, his horse's footfalls echoing back for a long time in the still air.

Captain Ramirez called a halt, dismounted all his men, who fed their horses and ate a scanty meal. Then he sent out two scouts. On their return they said the castle was but a mile or two away. The bridge across the chasm had been cut. The trestles still remained, and in the bushes they had found some planks they thought might stretch across. The captain saddled up at once, and dashing forward, drove the Moors into the fort. No time was to be lost, for bolts and arrows whistled among them, wounding several of the men. The captain's first care was to send the horses to the rear, out of the missiles' way. Then he called out for volunteers. All answered his demand, and carrying brushwood cut down with their swords, to shelter them, they bridged the chasm, losing a man or two slain by the stones the Moors cast down on them. The Turk stood on the walls directing everything. No shot could touch him. The soldiers said he was in league with Satan, or had a hundred lives. When

REDEEMED

all was ready and the fire of the harquebuses and the crossbowmen kept back the enemy from the bridge, there was a pause. The hardy soldiers, who had faced perils all their lives in the Italian and Dutch wars, in Mexico and in Peru, stood hesitating, for it seemed certain death to venture on the planks exposed to fire and to a rain of stones.

The captain was tightening up his belt to lead his men to victory or to death, when he was put aside, firmly but gently. His eyes ablaze, his face pale as a corpse, his habit tucked up to his belt, carrying a sword in one hand and in the other holding a crucifix, Fray Juan de Dios rushed across the bridge amid a shower of stones. The soldiers, yelling "Santiago, close up Spain ; death to the Moorish dogs !" rushed after him and battered down the door. For half an hour the fight raged furiously without a thought of quarter, the soldiers striking down the Moors, who fought to their last breath, stabbing their enemies upon the ground in their death agony. Mamet Ali, still without a wound, fought stubbornly up the stone stairway to the roof, then bounding on the parapet, hurled a last curse against the Nazarenes and sprang into the abyss. Down in the courtyard, after his losses had been counted, Ramirez wiped his

P R O M O T E D

sword upon the cloak of a dead Moor. "The dogs fought well," he said to his lieutenant. "Where is the friar? for after God we owe the victory to him. This time he shall be made alferez if I have to go to Rome to get the Holy Father to absolve him from his vows. I will promote him this time, no matter what he says." His second in command looked at him sadly, saying, "It is in vain. He was promoted half an hour ago in his own regiment. . . . Come and see where he lies."

Ten paces from the gate he lay, his eyes wide open, the fire of combat gone from them, and a contented smile upon his face. A little stream of blood, already nearly dried, had trickled from his lips, as a great rock crushed in his chest. His sword, broken and bloody, was by his side. With his last breath he had grasped the crucifix in his right hand.

AT NAVALCÁN

WE had been riding through the open park-like oak forests that had been sown with corn, now reaped, at the fast jog known as the Castilian pace. It had not rained for months, and the rough trail lay inches deep in dust as white as flour. The greyhounds following us lolled out their tongues like long, red rags, and trotted on resignedly close to the horses' heels. Not a bird stirred in the torrid heat. The air seemed as if heated in a furnace, and a few cattle here and there stood motionless in the dry streams, as if they knew that there was water underneath the surface, although they could not reach it. The bark upon the cork-trees scattered among the oaks seemed bursting. Even the lizards appeared to run across the track as if they did so under protest, scared by our horses' feet.

Nicholás checked his lean, roan mare, and stopping in a long account of his adventures in the Manigua of Cuba, where in days past he had served against Maximo Gomez and Maceo, pointing to a conglomeration of brown, dusty houses that clustered round

AT NAVALCÁN

the tower of a church, a mile or two away, said "There is Navalcán. They will be dancing in the plaza already, Don Roberto," he said; "let us push on and see them in their old dresses, for in Navalcán they are still Spaniards as God made them in days past. Old Cirilo's daughter was married this morning, and we shall be in time to see the fiesta if we spur on a bit."

He settled himself back upon his saddle, and with his face tanned by the tropics and his native sun, his suit of dark grey velveteen, and his short jacket, over which he wore a leather shoulder-belt with a great boss of brass stamped with the arms of the Dukes of Frias, for he was their head gamekeeper, he looked just like the yeoman on the good grey mare that he was riding "*a la gineta*" who Cervantes has immortalised.

We spurred our horses, passed by the ruined Roman bridge with its high arch spanning the dried-up river, stopped for a moment under a gnarled oak-tree, for Nicholás to point out where he had killed a wolf last winter, and diving down a steep path like the bed of a torrent, entered the outskirts of the old-world town. Men upon donkeys and on mules, with now and then a horseman sitting high on his semi-Moorish saddle, his feet

encased in iron shoe stirrups, passed us, all going to the feast. Pigs ran about the streets, as much at home as Peter in his house, as Nicholás observed. Children, ragged, bright-eyed and dirty, stared at the passers-by from the doors of houses, as Kaffir children might stare at a strange white man passing before their kraal.

We clattered up a steep and stony lane, the horses' shoes striking a stream of sparks from the rough stones, and got off at the house of one Cirilo, an ex-alcalde of the town. Short, stout, dressed in black velveteen, a broad black sash wound three or four times about his waist, a stiff and broad-brimmed black felt hat upon his head and alpargatas on his feet, he seemed descended apostolically from Sancho Panza, both in appearance and in speech. Our horses were led by one of Cirilo's sons, just in the way Cervantes describes, when the Knight of the Rueful Figure and his squire arrived at many another such a little town as Navalcán. Assembled in the chief room of the house, adorned with a few pictures of the saints, a curious piece of old embroidery in a black frame, and several trophies of the chase, were all the notabilities. Much did we salute each other, inquiring minutely after the state of health of all our separate families, and

AT NAVALCÁN

being assured that the poor house in which we sat was ours. The mistress of the place and her two tall daughters stood about, talking and bringing wine, lemonade, and cakes of meal and honey, with the same white, flake pastry that the Moors left in Spain and that is to be seen to-day in every house in Fez and Tetuán.

They stood about, sitting down only occasionally and as if under protest, for in old-world places such as Navalcán, women, all unknown to themselves, have still continued the old Arab custom of never sitting down to eat together with the men. Being strangers in that remote and time-neglected village, we also in a way acted as newspapers. "What of Morocco and the accursed war? Neighbour Remigio has a son there fighting the infidel. He cannot use the pen, so that his father does not know if he is alive or dead." Then with a touch of that materialistic scepticism that is at once the strength and weakness of the race, "The big fish make their harvest out of it, I suppose, for in disturbed rivers fishermen find their gain." Cirilo took off his hat and wiped his forehead, conscious that by the enunciation of a proverb he had clinched the matter for all time. Our hats he had begged us to take off, and placed them on a chair, for

REDEEMED

a guest's hat in old-world towns in Spain is handled with respect.

The conversation ran a good deal on the price of pigs, of mules, sheep, horses, and other matters that men of culture take their delight in talking of the whole world over. All governments were bad, and politics the ruin of a country, yet none of them ever in his life lifted a hand to change a government, but talked of politics for hours. The clergy, too, were rogues who did no work of any kind, were drones and cumberers of the earth, yet they went religiously to mass, and when the parish priest came round to drink a glass of wine with us, all rose up courteously to do him reverence. A native of Asturias, a province he described as quite a paradise, the priest gave it as his opinion that England was by degrees emancipating herself from the bonds of the heresy that Henry VIII and his accursed concubine, Ana Bolena, had promulgated. I said I thought it might be so, and that when all was said and done Ana Bolena had paid dearly, both for her carnal lapses and her heresy. As one who is enunciating an eternal verity, Father Camacho rejoined in a grave voice, "Sir, she is burning in hell fire for all eternity." I left it at that, hoping the faggots might be after all made of asbestos

AT NAVALCÁN

and the poor sinner's sufferings mitigated by the intervention of Jehovah's other self, Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

After a round of the strong, harsh, red wine that in those parts is jocularly referred to as "Peleon," that is, the fighter, whether from its effect upon the stomach or the brain is doubtful, washed down with sweet and sticky lemonade, Cirilo said the dancing in the plaza had begun. The ceremony in the church had taken place at eleven in the morning, so that the happy pair were actually joined in holy matrimony, or as the country people say, "married in Latin," and in their new estate were welcoming their friends.

Outside the door the strains of the dulzaina, the Arab pipe the Moors left in Spain, accompanied by the sacramental drum, mixed with the blare of a brass band. The little winding streets were like the beds of torrents, with great live rocks coming to the surface, worn smooth and slippery by the passing feet of mules and horses since Navalcán was Navalcán. Men passed who might have stepped out of past centuries, all in the old Castilian peasant's dress, made of black velveteen, short jackets, open waistcoats and frilled shirts. They wore black broad-brimmed hats over silk handkerchiefs bound round their heads

with the ends hanging down like tails. Where the streets were free from rocks the white dust lay so thickly that the feet of the passers-by, all shod with alpargatas, made no more sound than if it had been snow on which they walked. Now and again, above the music of the band, came a wild cry from one of the excited village youths, so like the neighing of a horse, it seemed impossible that it was not a stallion calling to a mare.

A mass of country people filled the middle of the square. Only one man, a neighbouring proprietor, was dressed in modern clothes. The women, for the most part, wore gay-coloured petticoats, giving them a look of humming tops as they moved to and fro. Over their skirts they had a long lace apron, worked in elaborate openwork designs, that in most cases had been generations in their families. Under their short basque jackets their loose white blouses, elaborately worked and frilled, swelled out like pouter pigeons' crops. Their heads were bare, and their thick hair, as black as jet, was parted in the middle, brushed close against their cheeks, and plaited into two long pigtails, hanging down their backs. All wore gold earrings worked in filigree, and round their necks strings of gold beads, heirlooms from older

AT NAVALCÁN

days. Their feet were shod with dark, brown leather shoes, latched on the instep and cut in open patterns by a rustic shoemaker. Though they were peasants they all walked with the incomparable carriage of the women of their race, with the slight motion of the hips that sets the petticoats a-swinging, just as a horse's tailswings very gently to and fro at the Castilian pace.

The dancers formed a long line down the middle of the square, the men and women standing opposite each other. The bride and bridegroom stood in the middle of the line. The bride, tall, handsome, dark, and active on her feet as a wild colt, wore a silk skirt almost concealed under the folds of old-fashioned coarse lace that had belonged to her great-grandmother. Upon her head she wore the "Cresta," a high knot of ribbon shaped something like a coxcomb, to show she had never made a slip of any kind. This badge, the people said, was getting rarer than it used to be for brides, a circumstance that they attributed to the decay of morals, that had been going on continuously for the last five hundred years. This bride upheld the ancient purity of Castilian morals in spite of being five-and-twenty years of age. It somehow made one think about the girl

REDEEMED

who had received the prize of virtue five years running, and in the comic opera remarked, “*Oui, cinq fois rosière, c'est joli, mais cristi ! que c'est dur.*”

The bridegroom, a tall, swarthy youth, who had already an anticipatory air of cuckledom about him, between excitement and the wine that he had evidently drunk was streaming down with sweat. Still, when the band, placed just beneath the village cross, struck up a lively Jota he capered nimbly, first with one girl, then with another, snapping his fingers like a pair of castagnettes, with his arms held above his shoulders and waving to and fro. A thick, white dust covered the dancers’ old-fashioned dresses, as it were with flour, and falling on the women’s black and glossy hair, gave it a look of being powdered, not unbecoming to them.

When the band stopped from sheer exhaustion and the dulzaina players’ cheeks were for a spell deflated, great pitchers of rough earthenware full of the heady country wine were handed round among the crowd. They drank, first looking towards the bride, and wishing her long life and many children, then drew the backs of their brown, toil-stained hands across their mouths, tightened their sashes, and after taking one of the black

AT NAVALCÁN

and coarsely made cigars the bridegroom went about offering to everybody from a brown paper parcel, fell to a-dancing, with the cigars behind their ears. Wild goats or antelopes could not have been more active than the youths and maidens ; the swing and perseverance of the band were wonderful. The elders stood about in groups, smoking the rank, ill-made cigars that a paternal Government in Spain provides at its own prices to its citizens.

The band ceased suddenly, without a warning, just as a gipsy song ends, on a long-drawn-out note. The men, after the fashion of their kind the whole world over, collected into groups and criticised the girls as they walked to and fro with their arms round each other's waists. Great tables were laid out in the patio of a house, with rows of pitchers filled with wine and round hard rolls upon the spotless tablecloth, making one think of Leonardo's "Last Supper," and hope no Judas would intrude upon the feast. In the house where the happy pair were going to reside their friends and neighbours all had brought their offerings. Jugs, pots, pans, washing-basins, hoes, spades and axes, great skins of wine, salt, sugar, coffee ; innumerable bundles of cigars, adzes and planes, saws, gimlets,

and almost every article of rural life lay piled upon the floor. A load of wood, sacks of potatoes, with jars of olives and of oil, recalled a wedding such as Theocritus might have celebrated.

Then, entering the house, the bride received us, and all the strangers, who had not come provided with their household offerings, presented five or ten dollars to the bridegroom, who thanked them fluently in such well-chosen language as few dwellers in the north, men of much more education than himself, could hope to compass. He handed all the money to the bride, who put it carefully into a bag she carried by her side and thanked the givers, who once again wished her health and happiness, with many children and long-drawn-out years, with self-possession and the grave air of dignity that comes so naturally to the Castilians. Cirilo hoped that she would imitate her mother, who had thirteen children, and his daughter, smiling at him, rejoined that she would try.

In an inside apartment, that in Spain is called an alcove, without a window and stiflingly hot, was placed the marriage bed. Full five feet from the ground it stood, with mattress upon mattress piled mountains high, a great lace valence worked by the bride

AT NAVALCÁN

herself in antique patterns of men on horse-back, tall cypresses, and crosses here and there, swept down and touched the floor. The coverlet was lace, made by the mother of the bride and by her sisters, and the four curtains hanging from the posts were of a curious kind of needlework, exactly like that made by the Moorish women in North Africa. In a dark outhouse, outside the bridal chamber with its four-poster bed, were laid a plank or two, covered with several sheepskins and a rug. This Spartan couch tradition had provided for the bridegroom, who had to occupy it till the last guest retired.

Once more Cirilo took us to his house, and once again regaled us with wine and lemonade, cakes, coffee, and with old-world sweetmeats, made of the kernels of a pine-cone, stewed in honey, into a sticky little slab. We mounted at his door, with all his family holding the stirrups and the reins ; wished him farewell with a cascade of thanks, and picked our way through the dark streets, our horses plunging wildly now and then, for from each door the citizens were sending rockets whizzing through the air, and serpents ran along the stones, exploding loudly and shedding a blue glare upon the ground.

Outside the town, when we had got a pull

REDEEMED

upon our horses, the moon had risen, making the bushes take fantastic shapes, and look like animals, ready to spring upon us. The mountains of the Gredos looked unearthly in the moonlight, the shrill cicalas kept up a continuous singing, and neither Nicholás nor I said anything for a mile or two, till turning round he asked me, “Have you seen anything like that in England, Don Roberto ?” To which I answered “No.”

INVENI PORTUM

JOSEPH CONRAD

A LIGHT warm rain fell upon the old-world streets. The houses, with their casement windows, timbered upper stories and overhanging eaves, still kept the air as of an older world. The gateways, with their battlements and low archways through which the medieval traffic once had flowed, with men-at-arms and archers, strings of pack-horses, monks, nuns, and pilgrims come to worship at the shrine of Becket, were now mere monuments.

Time had but mellowed without defacing them, although the damp had made the stone peel off in flakes, giving it a look of scales. Long stretches of the city wall still stood, covered with a growth of wallflowers and of valerian, loved of cats. Houses and yet more houses crowded in upon the cathedral, usurping what by rights should have been a grassy close, guarded by elm-trees or by limes, with nests for rooks, who with their cawing supple-

mented the murmuring masses in the adjacent choir, for surely rooks in a cathedral close must ever praise the Lord for their quiet, sheltered lives. Grouped round its dominating church the city huddled as if it sought protection against progress and modernity. Bell Harry in his beauty seemed a giant lighthouse pointing heavenwards. It was indeed a haven where a man who had had his fill of this world's din might well retire to and find rest, for the incoming cricketers were evidently but birds of passage, and when they all departed once more the town would sink back to repose. Although the streets were decorated with flags and floral arches and filled with sun-burned athletes, and the companions of their beds and bats, with cohorts of the clergy come up from their parsonages, greeting effusively Old Brown of Brasenose or Smith of Wadham, whom they met annually at this, the week of weeks—for cricket is a sport that clergymen can attend without offence—nothing could take away the air of medieval quiet that broods upon the town. The peaceful landscape, with the slow Medway winding through its fields of lush, green grass, full of contemplative cows, its apple orchards, its rubble churches, with their truncated spires and air of immortality, is restful to the eye.

The town itself, resting from its long strife with time, brings quiet to the soul.

On every side are relics of the past—gates, barbicans, and walls, the grassy mound of the Dane John, about whose origin so many legends cluster, the square, squat tower, all that remains to show where once the church of Mary of Magdala stood, the crypt where exiled Huguenots performed their maiméd rites, the helm and gauntlets of the Black Prince of Wales and Gascony, above his tomb in the cathedral, speak of the past ; the resting past, for in the present, as in the days when past was present, there can be no peace. The quiet old city seemed indeed a fitting place in which to harbour one who long had battled with tempestuous seas, had heard the tropic rollers kissing the coral reefs and felt the sting of spindrift coating his beard with salt. So to the chapel of the older faith he held, not only as a faith, but as a bulwark against Oriental barbarism, we bore his coffin, buried under flowers, laid it before the altar railings, and his friends, Catholic and Protestant alike, with those who hold that God will not damn those whom He created with the potentialities of damnation in their bodies and their souls, for the mere fun of damning, all listened to the “ blessed mutter of the Mass,” devoutly

on their knees. Within that little fane, with its images of saints, enough for faith, for faith works miracles, even upon the optic nerve, perhaps, but not enough for art, all became Catholics for the nonce. When all is said and done, of all the faiths it is the most consolatory, and tears stood in the eyes of many of the heterogeneous congregation. What, after all, is better for the soul than prayer to an unseen God, in an uncomprehended tongue? When the priest got to *Ite Missa est* no one appeared to have found the service wearisome, for somehow it seemed to join us to the friend whom we should see no more, a little longer.

Then, through the streets all hung with flowers, as if to honour him whom we were taking to his anchorage, we took our way out to the cemetery. We passed through ancient archways, skirted the crumbling walls, caught glimpses of the cathedral towers up winding streets, marvelled at the number of the churches, and marked the advertisement of something or another, carried out in the vile bodies of three poor Christians, decked with huge, grinning cardboard heads, as in a pantomime.

I think there was little that we did not see, from the collected band of cricketers, who,

standing at the chief hotel, saluted as we passed, as reverently as if the funeral had been that of one of their own mystery, to dogs, that nearly sacrificed themselves beneath the wheels, a skewbald horse that drew a gipsies' caravan, and bullocks going to the slaughter-house, for when the soul is stirred the external eye looks upon the world more keenly than when we sit at home smoking a good cigar. Those sorts of drives in funeral carriages appear to last for ever, in fact one almost wishes that they would, for it is well that now and then a man should see *memento mori* written up plainly before his eyes, for him to read and inwardly digest. As we rolled slowly on into the open country the engine of the motor hearse slowed down to the jog-trot of the old-time funeral horse, so heavily the hand of custom bears upon the reins of everything. I fell into what in the north we call a "dwawm," that state in which the mind is active and as if freed from its subjection to the flesh. Time put the clock back for some five-and-twenty years or so, and I saw him who now lay in his coffin underneath the flowers, his battle over and his place assured in the great fellowship that Chaucer captains, struggling to make his way. What were his trials, what his disillusionments, and what he

suffered at the hands of fools, only himself could tell, and he was never one who wore his heart upon his sleeve for critics and for daws to peck at. For leagues we journeyed, as it appeared to me, passing men tedding haycocks in the field, Boy Scouts in brakes, and now and then a Kentish farmer in an old-fashioned dog-cart.

All the dead man had written and had done welled up in my mind. *Nostromo*, with its immortal picture of the old follower of Garibaldi, its keen analysis of character, and the local colour that he divined rather than knew by actual experience, its subtle humour, and the completeness of it all, forming an epic, as it were, of South America, written by one who saw it to the core, by intuition, amazed me just as it did when I first read it, *consule Planco*, in the years that have slipped past. Then came *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, into which he put the very soul of the old sailing ships, and that of those who sailed and suffered in them, as he himself once sailed and suffered and emerged, tempered and chastened by the sea. *Youth* and *The Heart of Darkness*, and then the tale of *Laughing Anne*, so deep and moving in its presentment of a lost woman's soul, all flitted through my mind. Lastly, *The Mirror of the Sea*, with

its old Danish skipper who intoned the dirge of ships, past, present and to come, haunted my memory. So dreaming with my eyes wide open, all the long years of friendship rolled back again, and my lost friend appeared, as I remembered him—was it a hundred years ago, or was it yesterday? For death annihilates perspective, blots out all sense of time, and leaves the memory of those that we have lost blurred in the outline, but more present to the mind than when Time, seeming but an invention of the poets with his unmeaning hour-glass, and his unnecessary scythe, still rolled on, as it seemed eternally, just as a man when dozing on his horse during a tedious night march, or jogging on behind a troop of cattle in the sun, thinks that his whole existence has consisted but of an ache between the shoulders and a dull throbbing at the knees. Waking or sleeping, or in a mixture of the two, but with my senses wide awake enough, I seemed to see my friend.

His nose was aquiline, his eyes most luminous and full. It seemed his very soul looked out of them, piercing the thoughts of those whom he addressed; his beard, trimmed to a point, was flecked with grey a little and his moustache was full. His face, of the dull yellow hue that much exposure to the tropic sun in youth so

often causes, was lined and furrowed by the weather. His dark and wiry hair age had respected except that it had grown a little thin upon the temples, leaving his forehead bare. His cheek bones, high and jutting out a little, revealed his Eastern European origin, just as his strong square figure and his walk showed him a sailor, who never seems to find the solid earth a quite familiar footing after a sloping deck. His feet were small and delicately shaped, and his fine, nervous hands, never at rest a minute in his life, attracted you at once. They supplemented his incisive speech by indefinable slight movements, not gestures in the Latin sense, for they were never raised into the air nor used for emphasis. They seemed to help him to express the meaning of his words without his own volition in a most admirable way. Something there was about him, both of the Court and of the quarterdeck, an air of courtesy and of high breeding, and yet with something of command. His mind, as often is the case with men of genius—and first and foremost what most struck one was his genius—seemed a strange compact of the conflicting qualities, compounded, in an extraordinary degree, of a deep subtlety and analytic power, with great simplicity.

As he discoursed upon the things that interested him, recalled his personal experiences, or poured his scorn and his contempt upon unworthy motives and writers who to attain their facile triumphs had pandered to bad taste, an inward fire seemed to be smouldering ready to break out, just as the fire that so long smouldered in the hold of the doomed ship in which he made his first voyage to the East suddenly burst out into flames. His tricks of speech and manner, the way he grasped both of your hands in his, his sudden breaking into French, especially when he was moved by anything, as when I asked him to attend some meeting or another, and he replied, "Non, il y aura des Russes," grinding his teeth with rage. England, the land of his adoption, he loved fervently, and could not tolerate that anything with which he had been once familiar should be tampered with, as often happens when a man adopts a second fatherland, for to change that which first attracted him seems a flat blasphemy.

As the car drew up at the cemetery gate with a harsh, grating noise upon the gravel, I wakened from my dream. The rain had cleared and the sun poured down upon us, as in procession, headed by the acolytes and priests, we bore the coffin to the grave. A

semicircle of Scotch firs formed, as it were, a little harbour for him. The breeze blew freshly, south-west by south a little westerly—a good wind, as I thought, to steer up Channel by, and one that he who would no longer feel it on his cheek, looking aloft to see if all the sails were drawing properly, must have been glad to carry when he struck soundings, passing the Wolf Rock or the Smalls after foul weather in the Bay.

Handsomely, as he who lay in it might well have said, they lowered the coffin down. The priest had left his Latin and said a prayer or two in English, and I was glad of it, for English surely was the speech the Master Mariner most loved, and honoured in the loving with new graces of his own.

The voyage was over and the great spirit rested from its toil, safe in the English earth that he had dreamed of as a child in far Ukrainia. A gleam of sun lit up the red brick houses of the town. It fell upon the tower of the cathedral, turning it into a great, glowing beacon pointing to the sky. The trees moved gently in the breeze, and in the fields the ripening corn was undulating softly, just as the waves waft in on an atoll in the Pacific, with a light swishing sound. All was well chosen for his resting-place, and so we

INVENI PORTUM

left him with his sails all duly furled, ropes flemished down, and with the anchor holding truly in the kind Kentish earth, until the Judgment Day. The gulls will bring him tidings as they fly past above his grave, with their wild voices, if he should weary for the sea and the salt smell of it.

EUPHRASIA

ON a mound in an upland field, right in the middle of a waste of ragwort, black knapweed, and a sea of myriads of eyebright, looking like stars upon a winter's night, there stands a War Memorial. The poorly carved Iona cross, and cast-iron railings with their gate looking as if bought at an ill country iron-monger's, serve but to render its loneliness still more pathetic, contrasted with the overwhelming landscape. "Agus Bheannaich an Sluagh no Daoine Uile a Therig iad Fein gu Toileach (Nehemiah, xi. 2)" runs the Gaelic text upon the plinth. Rendered in English it states, the men whose names are cut upon the stone gave their lives willingly. I do not doubt it, for they were born and passed their youth on the same soil and in the self-same atmosphere, sharp and invigorating, tempered with the acrid reek of peat, that nurtured Fingal, Cuchullin, Fergus and the heroes that the Celtic Homer sang.

At the foot of the lean field where stands the cross, there winds a long sea-loch with nothing on its shores except a ruined castle

to show that man has sailed its waters, since King Haco's fleet visited it, six hundred years ago. As it was when he saw it from his rude birlinn, with his oarsmen bending to their task, their shields ranged on the galley's sides, their swords bestowed beneath their feet upon the vessel's floor, so it remains to-day. The tide still leaves great fringes of brown kelp and yellow dulse upon its slippery rocks ; seals still bask on the islands ; the dogfish hunts the shoals of herrings, and the Atlantic clean, snell air comes up between South Uist and Benbecula, just as the "Summer Sailors" felt it on their tanned cheeks, stirring their yellow hair, in the days when in their long ships they scourged the Hebrides.

Green, flat-topped mountains tower up on the far side of the loch ; great moors, on which grow nothing but the cotton grass, sweet gale and asphodel, stretch towards the fantastic range of the dark, purple mountains to the east. Jagged and serrated, unearthly looking, shrouded in mists that boil and curl about their sides, they rise, looking as if they had something ominous about them, hostile to mankind.

The Ossianic heroes still seem to stalk about their corries and peep out from the mists approvingly at their descendants, whose

names are cut upon the little, lonely monument, set in its sea of wild flowers, opposite the loch. Far off Quiraing, Blaaven and Bein a Cailleach ; the unquiet tide rip opposite Kyle Rhea, Coruisk and Sligachan ; all the wild myrtle-scented moors, the black peat haggs, the air of wildness and remoteness from the world that even motors hooting on the road, and charabancs with loads of tourists, four-beplussed, shingled, and burberried to the eyes, cannot dispel entirely, make a fit setting for a memorial to men bred and begotten in the isle. Most of them served in Scottish regiments, MacAskill Royal Scots, MacMillan London Scottish, McAlister Scottish South Africans, Galbraith New Zealand Infantry, MacPhee Black Watch, McKinnes Scots Guards, McDonald of the Rhodesian Rifles, and many more, all Skye men, whose bones moulder in battle-fields far from the Winged Isle.

That nothing should be wanting to connect the warriors with their sea-roving ancestors, Captain McFarlane and Angus Cumming of the Mercantile Marine sleep with their slumbers soothed by the murmur of the waves above their heads, a fitting resting-place for men born in an island into which the sea-lochs bore to its very heart. Out of what shielings,

EUPHRASIA

with their little fields of oats and of potatoes that stretch like chess-boards on the hill-sides, won from the uncongenial soil by the sweat of centuries of work, the humble warriors came, only their families can tell.

It matters little, reared as they were with one foot in the past, one hand on the "Caschrom" the other on the handle of some up-to-date reaping machine from Birmingham. Those only who had gone out to the Colonies could have known much about the outside world, until the breaking out of the Great War, in which they lost their lives. For them no placards, with their loud appeals to patriotism, could have been necessary. For a thousand years their ancestors had all been warriors, thronging to enlist in the Napoleonic Wars, eager to join Montrose and Claverhouse, and fighting desperately among themselves when there was peace abroad. They fought their fight, giving up all that most of them possessed, their lives. And now, although their bodies are disintegrated in the four quarters of the globe, it well may be their spirits have returned to some Valhalla in the mists that roll round Sligachan.

Seasons will come and go ; the ragworts blossom in the fields where stands the monument, wither and die, and flower again next

year. Time will roll on. The names carved upon the stone become forgotten. The cross may fall, and the cheap iron railings exfoliate away to nothing. The very wars in which the Islemen fell become but a mere legend, as has happened to all other wars.

Men's eyes will turn more rarely to the memorial in the wind-swept field, and they will ask what it commemorates. Still, the wild hills will not forget, as they have not forgotten the story of the wars fought by the driver of the twin thin-maned, high-mettled, swift-footed, wide-nostriled steeds of the mountains, "Sithfadda and Dusrongeal." But if the eyes of men are turned no longer to the plinth, with its long list of names and Gaelic text, when the spring comes, and once again the eyebright springs in the hungry field, the west wind sweeping up the loch will turn a million little eyes towards the cross.

A HUNDRED IN THE SHADE

THE river looked like a stream of oil flowing between the walls of dense, impenetrable woods that fringed its banks. Now and again it eddied strongly and seemed to boil, as some great rock or snag peeped up menacingly. Then it flowed on again resistlessly, bearing upon its yellow flood great trunks of Bongos or of Ceibas, as if they were but reeds. Toucans, looking as if they had been fashioned rather by Gian Baptista Porta than by nature, darted like king-fishers across its face. Parrots screeched harshly, and above the tallest trees, macaws, blue, red and orange, soared like hawks, looking as fitting to their natural surroundings as rooks in England cawing in the elms. Upon the sand-banks great saurians basked, and when they felt the passing steamer's wash, rolled into the stream, as noiselessly as water-rats in a canal.

Now and again a little clearing broke the hostile wall of the fierce-growing vegetation, with a few straw-thatched huts, a mango-tree or two, and a small patch of maize or yucca, with an unsubstantial fence of canes. Occasion-

REDEEMED

ally, where a stretch of plain intervened between the woods, a lean vaquero on a leaner horse, his hat blown back, forming a sort of aureole of straw behind his head, galloped along the banks after a point of steers, or merely raced the steamer for a few hundred yards and then, checking his horse, wheeled like a bird upon the wing. The steamer, painted a dazzling white, with decks piled one upon another till it looked like a floating house, belched out its thin wood smoke and panted as it fought the powerful, almost invisible current of the oily stream. Upon each side a barge was lashed, carrying a load of cattle that diminished day by day, as one was slaughtered every morning, in full sight of its doomed fellows, whose hooves were dyed red with the blood that flowed upon the deck.

As the boat forced its way up-stream the heat grew daily greater, and the fierce glare from the surface of the water more intense. The sun set in a dull, red orb, and from the banks there rose a thin, white mist. From the recesses of the forests came the cries of wild animals, silent by day, but roused into activity at night. The monkeys howled their full-throated chorus, jaguars and wild cats snarled, and in the stillness the brushwood rustled as some nocturnal animal passed

A HUNDRED IN THE SHADE

through them stealthily. Clouds of mosquitoes filled the air, rendering sleep impossible. Even the freshness of the evening seemed to wear away as night wore on, and one by one the jaded passengers sought the topmost deck-house to try to catch the breeze.

Sprawling in wicker chairs, as the steamer forged along, the great black banks of vegetation sliding towards her as she passed, the passengers, mopping themselves and killing the mosquitoes now and then with a loud slap, relapsed into a moody silence, as they sipped iced drinks. Now and then someone cursed the heat, and now and then one or another of the perspiring band would walk to the thermometer, hung between the windows of the deck-house, and then exclaim, "Jesus! a hundred in the shade." One of the group of men who looked at him as a shipwrecked sailor might look out for a sail, said, "In the moon, you mean," and sank back on his chair with as much elasticity as a sponge thrown out of a bath rebounds upon the floor.

At last, rounding a bend, a light breeze ruffled the surface of the river and brought a little life into the men lounging in their deck-chairs. No one could think of sleep in such conditions. Talk languished after a few general remarks about the price of cattle, and

the usual stories about the prowess of the horses, the best in the whole world, that everyone had owned, for general conversation usually flags in a society of men, when women and horses have been discussed. No one spoke for a considerable time, as the steamer swept along through the dark alley of the woods, illuminated by a thousand million fireflies flashing among the trees. The dark, blue southern sky, and the yellow waters of the stream, lighted up by the powerful port and starboard lights, appeared to frame the vessel in, and cut her off from all the world.

Without preamble, the orchid hunter, a thin, sunburned man, spectacled and bald, took up his parable. He told of having camped alone in Singapore, and being bitten on the forefinger of his left hand by some poisonous snake or other. "I had no antidote of any kind with me. My whisky bottle was quite empty. Not that I think it would have done much good had it been full, for I was so well soaked in it, I should have been obliged to drink a quart before it took effect on me. Yes, well, we orchid hunters as a rule are not teetotallers. Perhaps the damp, the solitude, or God knows what, soon drives most of us to drink. What did I do? Oh, yes, I sawed the finger off with a jack-knife.

A HUNDRED IN THE SHADE

Of course it hurt ; but it was just root hog or die. The worst of it is that the mosquitoes always fasten on the stump.” He held up a brown mutilated hand for us to look at and then, after a long pull at his iced drink, sank back again into the silence that had become a second nature to him. Perhaps to those who practise orchid hunting it seems indecent to be talking, in the primeval silence of the woods.

To the disjointed story of the orchid hunter, that seemed to be extracted from him almost against his will, succeeded the impresario of a travelling operetta company, fluent and full of New York slang and jokes designed to please the intelligence of infant cavemen, long before wit or humour humanised the world. Withal not a bad fellow, for a man whose company, by his own confession, was half a brothel, and as difficult to drive as a whole waggon load of apes. A ranche man brought a whiff of purer air into the symposium, and as he sat tapping his leg with an imaginary whip, his thumb turned upwards from constant using of the lazo, his soft and soothing Western voice acted as a soporific on the company. They listened half awake to a long tale about the prowess of a Flathead Indian horse, “ a buck-skin and a single footer, why, that yer hoice would pick a animal out of a

bunch of steers, he knowed a fat one, too, better than a human, sure he did, that little hoice."

To him succeeded a traveller in a patent medicine that would cure snakebites, shingles, coughs, colds, and rheumatism. "What about earthquakes?" ejaculated someone. "Well, my stuff doesn't lay out to stop 'em; but it does no harm to 'em, anyway, and maybe might do some good to the survivors if they took it soon enough." He told us that he had never taken it himself, preferring good, sound whisky, but added, "I am its prophet, anyhow. 'One God, one Zamolina,' as good a creed as any other as far as I can see, and one a man can hold without much danger to his conscience, as long as the stuff sells."

The laugh that greeted the exposition of the creed of the patent medicine philosopher died away, and it appeared the experiences of the company had been exhausted. Confession, no matter if auricular or *coram publico*, generally extorts confession. Seated in the shade, so that up to the moment of his speaking no one had observed him, there was a quiet man, dressed in immaculate white clothes. His hundred dollar jipi-japa hat lay beside him on the deck. Somewhere about fifty years of age, his thick, dark hair was just

A HUNDRED IN THE SHADE

beginning to turn grey. Tall and athletic looking, he still had not the look of being used to frontier life, and his quiet voice and manner showed him to have received what for the want of any better word is styled education, a thing that though it can do nothing to improve the faculties, yet now and then gives them the power of self-expression, in natures previously dumb.

"I don't know why I should tell you or anybody," he said, "this tale, experience or what you like to call it, except that as it happened to me twenty years ago to-day, it seems impersonal and as if it had occurred to some one I had known. I was young then." He paused and drew himself up a little, as a well-preserved man of fifty does when he refers to himself as old, all the time feeling women still turn round to look at him as he passes on the street. "I was young then. . . . It was in New Orleans that I met her, an English girl, living alone, *faisant la cocotte* as they say down there. I think it was in the St. Charles Hotel that I first saw her. Tall and red-haired, not too fat, not too thin, as the Arabs say when speaking of a handsome woman. What her real name was I never knew. I liked her far too well ever to wish to pry into her life. Her *nom de*

REDEEMED

guerre was Daphne Villiers, and by that name I knew and by degrees began to love her. She lived in one of those old streets that run into Lafayette Square, in the French quarter of the town. I forgot to say she spoke all languages, French, Spanish and Italian, German, and God knows what, indifferently well. A rare thing for an Englishwoman, even of her profession.

"Her rooms were furnished, not in the style you might expect, big looking-glasses, Louis Quinze chairs and tables, with reproductions of the Bath of Psyche, Venus and Cupid, French prints of women bathing, as *Les Biches à la Mer*, or *La Puce*, showing a girl of ample charms catching a flea upon her leg, but simply and in good taste. Two or three bits of china, good but inexpensive, with one fine piece of Ming, and a Rhodes plate or two were dotted here and there. Upon the walls were a few engravings of French pictures, with one or two water-colours and a pastel of herself, done, as she said, in Paris by a well-known pastelist, with the signature carefully erased. What struck me most about the rooms was a small cabinet of books. Anatole France and Guy de Maupassant, some poetry, with Adah Mencken's verses, and some manuals on china and on

A HUNDRED IN THE SHADE

furniture, with Manon Lescaut, Dante's *Vita Nuova* and the *Heptameron* are what I recollect.

"There was a piano that she said 'of course is necessary in the metier,' on which she played not very well and sang French Creole songs with rather a good voice. Not having much to do at that time, I got to dropping in upon her whenever she was not engaged, not so much as a lover, but to enjoy a talk with someone whose mind did not entirely run upon the price of cotton, the sale of real estate, railway shares, dividends, the things in fact that citizens of God's Own Country chiefly converse about to the exclusion of all else. Curiously enough I was never jealous, although she often had to postpone my visits on account of her work. Of course, after the fashion of most women of her class, she always talked about 'my work.' She said she never drank except when she was working and I rather think that the use of the word kept me from being jealous, for I flattered myself she never used it when speaking of my visits to her.

"Little by little we grew almost indispensable to one another. I lent her books and literary magazines. How well I recollect bringing her *L'Imitation de Jésus* and how

she laughed, saying she knew it all by heart. 'Twas only then I found out that she was a Catholic ; not that she cared too much for her religion, but as she said, the Mass with all there is about it, lights, incense and the tradition of antiquity, appealed to her on the æsthetic side. Yes, well, yes, I got to love her, and to look forward to our long talks on books and china, pictures and the like. I never took her out to theatres, for she said people would think that she was 'working' if they saw me with her, and she looked upon me as a friend. I liked to hear her say so, for as time went on we had become quite as much friends as lovers, and I used to tell her everything that had happened to me since my last visit to her.

" She on her part used to advise me, as all women will advise the man they love. Though their advice may not be very weighty, yet a man is a fool who does not profit by it. One evening I went to see her, taking a big bunch of flowers, and when she thanked me I said, ' Congratulate me too, this is my birthday.' To my surprise she burst out crying, and for a long time I could not make her tell me the reason of her tears. At last she said, ' I should have liked to give you something, but you know how I live and I am sure you will

A HUNDRED IN THE SHADE

not take a present from me.' Nothing that I could say would pacify her, although I swore that I would value anything she gave. For a long time she sobbed convulsively, till at last, drying her tears up with a handkerchief, she smiled and coming up to me, threw her arms round my neck and said, 'I have one thing that I can give you, that belongs entirely to me, that is myself.'

"Business kept me from seeing her again for several days. The more I thought about her, the more certain it appeared I could not live without her. So on the first opportunity I sought the curious old winding street in the French quarter of the town. The house looked strangely silent, and after knocking at the door for a long time the coloured girl I knew so well opened it, crying, holding a letter and a little packet in her hand. 'Missy Daphne, she done gone away,' she said, and looked at me reproachfully, as I thought afterwards. The letter told me she had gone off to Tampico with a mining engineer, not a bad fellow, who she thought would marry her. She said she had acted for the best, for both of us, and asked me to accept the little piece of Chinese pottery I so often had admired."

The story-teller ceased his tale just as a

REDEEMED

bird stops singing, when you expect he will go on. Silence fell on the hearers. It may be some of them had had presents on their birthdays, of less value than the teller's of the tale. No one said anything except the ranche man with the directness of a simple soul, "Reckon you missed the round-up that time, friend." The story-teller nodded at him, and walking up to the thermometer, muttered, "A hundred in the shade."



